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English Poems
from
Dryden to Blake

English Poems
from
Dryden to Blake

edited
with an Introduction and Notes
by

James W. Tupper
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Preface

THE purpose of this volume is to include representative poems from the development of the neo-classical movement in the later decades of the seventeenth century to the fruition of romanticism in the closing years of the eighteenth. In the poems of Dryden, neo-classicism may be regarded as having received its first virile expression, and in the poetry of Blake, pre-romanticism had developed into a full-blown romanticism. Chronologically between these two poets were the "regulars," Pope, Swift, Addison, Johnson, Goldsmith, and lesser fry, as well as the numerous "independents," who in one way or another, through poems on melancholy, retirement, love of nature, the sense of individuality, and the like, contributed to an ultimate romanticism.

The texts are essentially as the authors left them in their last revisions. The final "-ed" and "-'d" have been retained, since the poets intended a distinction between the pronounced and the unpronounced final syllable. The punctuation has for the most part been preserved, since it is to be presumed that the author had some purpose, affecting either meaning or metre, in punctuating as he did. Capitalization, however, has been modernized, and in most cases the spelling has been made to conform to present English usage.

The critical material is such as may conveniently be contained in footnotes, and it is believed that there are enough of the latter to enable an intelligent student to read the text with ease. The lines are numbered as they would be in the original edition, so that the reader may know which, if any, lines have been omitted. For the most part, the poems are given in their entirety; when they have been too long for the limits of this anthology, a judicious selection has, I trust, been made.

Since the volume is intended for use in college classes, the poems that have been chosen are of the greatest literary merit and at the same time are the most characteristic of the period. The editor hopes that even more than in Matthew Arnold's time it may be realized that our eighteenth century is indispensable.

JAMES W. TUPPER

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English Poems
from
Dryden to Blake

Introduction

A period of approximately one hundred and twenty years is covered by the selections in this volume, and its range may be indicated by comparing Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" with Blake's "The Mental Traveller." The former, a thinly veiled satire on a specific political event and the persons involved in it, was frankly a piece of propaganda intended to influence a jury's verdict by extra-legal means; the other, so thickly veiled by mysticism that an exact interpretation is virtually impossible, deals with abstractions and symbols that obscurely present cycles of civilization. The earlier poem is reason in its most exalted mood; the later is imagination that must be apprehended in its expression rather than comprehended. This contrast between two writers is as sharply drawn as any other contrast, occurring within an equal period of years, in English literature.

Nearly every kind of poem is represented in this century. There are satires and moral essays in the heroic couplet and in blank verse; odes after the best neo-classical model, and odes as free as those of the romantic period; pastorals that belong to the established tradition of the Renaissance, and others that burlesque this tradition; and ballads which, approaching timidly under the apologetic patronage of Addison, later rush forward eagerly with the enthusiastic support of the pre-romantics. There is narrative verse in which is found everything from Byrom's account of a prize fight in his "Extempore Verses" to Burns's mixture of alcoholic and supernatural adventure in "Tam O'Shanter"; mock-heroic creations from Pope's "Rape of the Lock," with its suggestion of the ancient epics, to Shenstone's "The Schoolmistress," reminiscent of an English classic; imitations of Milton, Spenser, and mediaevals, and of epics which existed only in the imagination of their "discoverer." There are hymns expressing a reasoned theology in the orthodox vein of Addison, and others burning with the fervent piety of Wesley and the Methodists; and songs and lyrics that are suggestive of the

early Stuart poets, or that have more form than feeling, and still others that led in Scotland to the matchless poetry of Burns and in England to the rare melodies of Blake. And finally, there is the sentiment-filled verse which in one form or another heralded the outburst of the romantic movement in 1798, in the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads."

The Reaction of Neo-classicism: Dryden

When John Dryden began to write, in the sixth decade of the seventeenth century, the great tradition of the spacious times of Elizabeth had almost ceased. The soaring imagination and the superb diction of the earlier period had degenerated into a decadent preciosity and the torturing of "one poor phrase ten thousand ways." A thin and insincere emotionalism had pervaded much of the verse that appeared in the last years of the Commonwealth; on the whole, the rule of Cromwell had not been favorable to literary production. Milton had been engaged only in the writing of Puritan prose propaganda, which work he had continued until the very advent of Charles; the theatres had been closed since 1642; and Dryden himself had written a eulogy of the dead Protector—a eulogy not more distinguished than most contemporary verse.

With the Restoration came a quickening. The spirits of the English rose when they welcomed their new king to his throne. For Charles, a romantic figure, had been through many tribulations, and he was a blessed relief from the autocratic Cromwell and his dour Puritans. And so when he entered his kingdom and proceeded to enjoy it, his subjects followed his noble example. All moral restrictions were thrown to the winds by the Court and by all those who came within its bounds. When the theatres were opened in 1660 with the ready permission and encouragement of Charles, they furnished at once an outlet for the pent-up feelings of the aristocracy, which for some twenty years had been deprived of their privilege to do as they pleased in both art and morals. The drama, voicing the thoughts and emotions of a people now no longer suppressed by Puritanism, flourished in this period more than any other form of literature, and there was no limit to its joyous abandon. Comedy defied all the laws of decency in morals and of restraint in art; the heroic play

superabounded in a love and a valor that were as far removed from reality as the dialogue in the heroic couplet was from ordinary conversation; the songs that were interspersed throughout the plays were good lyrically almost in direct proportion as they were questionable morally. It was significant also that the prologues and the epilogues were sufficiently extravagant in their praise of a doubtfully meritorious play to earn the writer his fee, if he was not the author, or to make the performance a success, if the play was his own. For this extravagance was much like the final flourish of the Renaissance exuberance before it declined and ultimately decayed; indeed, it was as much a sign of decadence as the Elizabethan preciosity that found form in ridiculous conceits and worn-out clichés.

Yet this drama, with all its license, carried within itself the remedy for its disease. Many of the plays were written in the heroic couplet, a form absolutely unsuited to English drama but admirably adapted to argumentative or satiric poetry; and they also contained passages that were very poor drama but plausible reasoning and excellent characterization. The result was, especially in the case of Dryden, that good poetry grew out of this drama, in both the character and the form of the verse. Dryden needed only the occasion that would inspire him to the kind of poetry for which his genius best fitted him.

Dryden was long in meeting this occasion; he was fifty years old before he wrote really great satiric poetry. His early attempts gave very little promise of success. They were put forth at a time when the decadent affectation of the post-Elizabethans was at its worst. His notorious verses in memory of Lord Hastings contain conceits as banal as any of those perpetrated by his predecessors or contemporaries. Even when at twenty-seven he wrote the "Heroic Stanzas," and at twenty-nine "Astræa Redux," he did not reveal himself as much better than his fellow versifiers. Only here and there among his early creations does any promise of his future eminence manifest itself, for these poems, including even "Annus Mirabilis," written in 1666, have the appearance of a task done to order by a court poet. However, it was these twenty years spent in writing comedies, heroic plays, tragedies, and adaptations from other plays, that fitted Dryden to be

the precursor of neo-classicism. Here he got training in clear and cogent expression, in the conduct of an argument, and in the handling of exposition; he learned how to draw a character to the life and to present it vividly in well-balanced couplets; and through the frequent disputations in his plays he became familiar with the moral essay and satire.

By the time Dryden had finished the bulk of his plays, he was ready for his great satirical and moral essays. Here his real genius asserted itself with the largeness of vision and the force that had belonged to the early Elizabethans. He sloughed off the preciosity of the later Elizabethans and became the inheritor of the giant race before the flood. As T. S. Eliot says, in his "Homage to John Dryden," "he is the successor of Jonson and therefore the descendant of Marlowe; he is the ancestor of nearly all that is best in the poetry of the eighteenth century." That most of Dryden's satires and essays were merely occasional, and might never have come into being if he had not written them to influence a jury's deliberations or to humiliate an enemy or to utter an apology for his faith, does not make them the less great. The issue has passed away and is as dead as the jurymen, but "Absalom and Achitophel" lives on. Dryden would not be bound by the limits of his subject. Though he was a strong partisan of the king and had the best interests of the English people at heart, he levelled some of the finest satire in this poem against his royal master and directed some of his sharpest thrusts at his fellow-countrymen. With delicious irony he spoke of Charles II under the guise of David as a monarch "after heaven's own heart," who "godlike" "scattered his Maker's image through the land." The English he dubbed as

> God's pamper'd people, whom debauch'd with ease,
> No king could govern nor no god could please.

He made fun of Protestant priests as being more concerned for the fleece than for the flock. He was still more caustic in his sneer at transubstantiation,

> Where gods are recommended by their taste;
> Such savoury deities must needs be good
> As serv'd at once for worship and for food.

The portraits that appear in this poem are among the best character drawings we have in English. They have a sweep

and a depth beyond those of Pope and are reminiscent of the striking satirical figures in Jonson's comedies. The picture of Shadwell also is done to the life, and it is more than that of a third-rate poet who had aroused the laureate's wrath. To quote T. S. Eliot again, "Dryden's unique merit consists in his ability to make the small into the great, the prosaic into the poetic, the trivial into the magnificent." So there is something superb in the colossal dullness of Shadwell,

> Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.

Throughout, this poetry is marked by such incisiveness of thought, such brilliancy of diction, and such metrical effectiveness that in these respects also he becomes a connecting link between the Elizabethans and the neo-classicists. His verse combined the freedom of the older poets with a balanced epigrammatical quality that presaged Pope.

The lyric declined as the moral and satiric poem arose. Dryden's best work was in the songs that are found rather frequently in his plays, and some of them have considerable charm; but they were not always without the rather strong coloration of their rank environment. Many of them have a singing quality that still pleases, as they undoubtedly pleased the fine ladies and gentlemen that heard them originally in the theatre. However, as an example, the elegy in memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew became inspired only when Dryden turned from the memory of the woman to the subject of his beloved poetry; for he was as much fired by the profanation of lofty verse as Milton, in "Lycidas," was by the corruption of the clergy. Further, the two poems in celebration of St. Cecilia's Day are but jobs well done—excellent pieces of artisanship rather than art, written by request and having the appearance of work done to order, the framework of their construction still being visible. Both lyrics seem intended for an orchestra and have volume of sound rather than depth of feeling. They are the natural predecessors of the eighteenth-century ode, and like it are more the utterance of a chorus than the cry of an individual.

Neo-classic Ideals

With John Pomfret's "The Choice," we enter upon the comfortable eighteenth century, which believed in order and

common sense and had very material ideals as to what constituted the *summum bonum* of existence. These ideals, as presented by Pomfret, meant freedom from financial cares, remoteness from the rush and worry of a busy world, an environment of art and learning, the companionship of congenial guests and grateful beneficiaries, and peace, whether it were the peace of God or of the unmarried man. The highest good was to be attained by the avoidance of extremes and by the glorification of the happy mean; the century did not aspire after the impossible or indulge in vain romantic regrets that the perfect hour cannot endure. "The Choice" itself was written in a rather free form of the heroic couplet, and its diction was characteristic of the accepted manner of the neo-classical school. The poem and its sentiments were popular through the greater part of the century; as Dr. Johnson said, some eighty years later, "No composition in our language has been oftener perused."

In subsequent poems, much the same idea is found in one form or another, with some modification of detail. Their authors either enumerated the things that would make them happy or declared themselves satisfied with what they had. Prior made "sauntering Jack and idle Joan" perfectly content in their happy, carefree existence:

> Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
> They led—a kind of—as it were:
> Nor wish'd, nor car'd, nor laugh'd, nor cried,
> And so they liv'd; and so they died.

The longing for and the enjoyment of peace run through many of Lady Winchilsea's poems. It is peace of a quiet, melancholy nature, in keeping with her delicate, sensitive soul. "A Nocturnal Reverie" is a poem describing a scene of quiet beauty in the dimness of night, expressing a melancholy joy in the manner of Milton's "Il Penseroso";—in this respect it is more of the seventeenth century than of the neo-classical eighteenth. However, Byrom, in his "Careless Content" and "Contentment, or the Happy Workman's Song," took a cheerful, materialistic view of life. He saw the workman as being able to look upon his lot as the will of God and to accept it without repining.

The theme of peace and contentment is lifted to a higher plane by the more thoughtful writers. Isaac Watts, with his strong religious nature, found true riches not in

Wealth and honours that have wings,

but in the treasures of the soul,

thoughts of larger growth,
Ripening into solid truth.

In its ultimate perfection this ideal would be reached in heaven, as he presented it in his hymn, "There is a land of pure delight." So Parnell in his "Hymn to Contentment" held that "lovely, lasting peace" is to be found not in solitude nor in "trailing purple o'er the ground," but in governing one's will and passions. The solitary meditation that Milton praised in "Il Penseroso" Parnell condemned, except as it is turned to God. But peace and contentment are also found in the midst of the beauties of nature. Dyer seeks his happiness in the quiet loveliness of "Grongar Hill": it is not in the "domes of care" that he takes delight, but rather where

Grass and flowers quiet treads.

Shenstone summons up the "soft scenes of contentment and ease" as a means of wooing his beloved: all the beauties that may be found in a lovely eighteenth-century garden are there for her delight. And Akenside finds in a grotto the fulfilment of his desires, as he enumerates them in his "Inscription for a Grotto." For here are the fig-tree and the vine, cowslips pale and clustering fruits, in the midst of which the poet slumbers,

Lull'd by the murmur of my rising fount.

The same theme is chanted by the pre-romantics, but with a difference, as they lament that the desire of their heart will pass away. Shenstone, in his "Elegy: He complains that the pleasing novelty of life is over," grieved that beauty must vanish:

It will not, will not last!
This faery-scene, that cheats our youthful eyes!

Gray was saddened by the thought that the happiness of the young Etonians will vanish as soon as they go out into the world:

> Since sorrow comes too late,
> And happiness too swiftly flies.
> Thought would destroy their paradise.
> No more; where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

Conversely, the happiness of the simple country folk of Gray's "Elegy" consisted in their having been so remote from the madding crowd's ignoble strife that they could keep the noiseless tenor of their way; and Goldsmith, in "The Deserted Village," regretted the misfortune that came to the villagers through a change in their economic state, so that their idyllic existence ceased to be, and they were scattered to the four quarters of the globe.

The progress from a contentment with the good things of this life to the realization that they neither satisfy nor endure is characteristic of the change from neo-classicism to romanticism. The sense of satisfaction with purely material things gives way to the need for spiritual values as furnished by religion; and this need is paralleled by the longing for beauty, which, because of its impermanence, leads to romantic regret, a theme fully developed in the poetry of the early nineteenth century.

The Minor Poets of the Early Years of the Century

The poetry of the early years of the eighteenth century is not of high quality but it does mark the establishment, as the prevailing mode, of neo-classicism, or the rule of order, and common sense. Defoe carried on the journalistic tradition of Dryden, although with less of that power which lifts journalism into great satiric poetry. His "The True-Born Englishman" is propaganda dominated by reason, an *argumentum ad hominem* to show that King William was no more a foreigner than his English subjects, and that they had no right to stigmatize him as a Dutchman. It is good, vigorous verse in the heroic couplet, and is in form and content a neo-classical poem. In poetic merit it is about equal to John Philips's "The Splendid Shilling," a delightful mock-

heroical piece, not in couplet form but in pseudo-Miltonic blank verse:—stinking tobacco and torn breeches in an epic setting give an idea of the character of the parody. The work was immensely popular throughout the eighteenth century and inspired many imitations.

The work of William Walsh, who feeling the trend of his time advised Pope to seek correctness in his poetry, is rather slight and is more suggestive of the Caroline poets than of the neo-classical. Among his verses was a sonnet on death, mainly to turn a compliment to a certain Celia. The poetry of Addison, another of the principal figures, was far inferior to his prose. The subjects of his poems were more adaptable to a prose rendering—by him, at least—than to verse. A criticism of the English poets, a military campaign, and travels in Italy might have been rendered into striking poetry by Dryden or Pope, but they were not so rendered by Addison. Here are order and reason and common sense, but not poetry. His hymns, which are still sung in the churches, attempt to demonstrate by pure reason the existence of God, as no hymn should seek to do; or they present pious, orthodox doctrine.

Bernard Mandeville, in his "Grumbling Hive," furnished a delicious example of reason by playing with men's more sacred beliefs and making nonsense of them. He shocked his contemporaries with a radicalism more characteristic of a flippant twentieth-century writer than of one living in the orthodox eighteenth century. His generation did not heed him, and he remained virtually unknown until our own time. He maintained that vice is necessary to happiness in this very imperfect world, that all Utopias are idle dreams, and that all striving toward perfection is a futility that carries its own defeat. His moral code is expressed in these words:

> fools only strive
> To make a great an honest hive.
> T' enjoy the world's conveniences,
> Be famed in war, yet live in ease,
> Without great vices, is a vain
> Utopia seated in the brain.

Lady Winchilsea, Prior, and Gay wrote light verses somewhat lyrical in quality and not always suggestive of the

poetry of order and reason. Lady Winchilsea composed graceful verses on nature and life, indicative of a sensitive mind and a facile pen. But, as Ardelia, she was infected with the sophistication of her time and never allowed her feelings to run into an unconventional enthusiasm. Unlike Keats, she did not lose herself in the rapture of the nightingale; she merely contrasted the song of the bird with that of the poet, in a satirical and moralizing manner. Prior's great charm is in his delightful lyrics, which have a Caroline rather than an Augustan flavor. His *vers de société* are best when they are least ambitious. He had a happy turn of phrase and a merry wit, as long as he kept away from serious themes; and his finest verses are as gay and carefree as his Peggy and his Cloe and, best of all, his Jinny the Just. Gay's best songs were sung in his plays. None of them had the charm of Prior's, although his more pretentious poems are better, especially those which were intended to ridicule the absurdities of Ambrose Philips's pastorals with their mawkish sentimentality and pseudo-realism, but which became genuinely realistic pastorals with high poetic merit. His fables have not sustained their contemporary popularity, though some of them have enough humor to keep them alive. His "Trivia," a mock-heroic treatment of the dangers and difficulties of the London streets, is clever neo-classical realism, even without the acerbity of Swift's poems on similar subjects. It is an excellent record of contemporary conditions in London as well as an amusing satire on men and things.

Swift and Pope

Swift and Pope are the two great names in neo-classical literature. Their province is satire and the moral essay or fable. Swift is supremely great in prose, Pope in verse; Swift was the greater genius, Pope the greater artist. Swift's powers found vent in prose narratives, pamphlets, essays, and political propaganda, as well as in caustic verses and playful poetical compliments; Pope's art embraced literary criticism, moral essays, and satire, and it brought the heroic couplet to a technical perfection unsurpassed before or since. In these two men the neo-classical movement reached its zenith in both form and substance.

The satire of Swift is more virulent than that of any other writer of the century. In his verse it appears as ironic laughter, unbounded contempt, or mocking disgust. In his "Verses on the Death of Doctor Swift," he represented his so-called friends as discussing over a game of cards the sickness and death of the dean with no more concern than that manifested over the taking of a trick. The decay of brilliant faculties and the actual decease are but subjects for casual comment: "The dean is dead: Pray, what is trumps?" Similarly, for him there is no beauty in town or country. A city shower but pours into the gutters the filth of the streets, and the morning has all the ugliness of a misspent life. The Day of Judgment is concerned only with the damned. There is no one saved; there is no heaven—not even an empty one. All are unredeemed sinners who are going to hell, to which Swift commits them with all the gusto of a Puritan parson Wood, whose half-pence caused so much trouble and whom Swift exposed in his "Drapier's Letters," was treated as not even worthy of hell. He was a maggot to be drowned in "his own melted copper." It is only when his thoughts turn to Stella, as, fortunately, they often did, that he finds some redeeming qualities in life. Not all is hopeless in this world, for

> is not virtue in mankind
> The nutriment that feeds the mind?

Swift's verse form suits his temper. Its octosyllabic couplets, when used in satire, are flippant, mocking, cynical; when used in his non-satirical poems, they are playful and light. They do not have the rapier-thrust of Pope's finished heroic couplets, but they are neater than the thumping of Butler's Hudibrastic octosyllabics.

In the work of Pope, the accomplishment of the neo-classical school could go no further. Pope took Walsh's advice literally and became the most correct poet of a most correct age. None of the tradition of the Renaissance survives in his poetry, except, of course, his weak and immature pastorals, which may be forgotten as the sins of his youth; and so his vision lacks the broadness which Dryden had inherited from that spacious period. His satire is direct and pointed, and is the embodiment of common sense as

interpreted by the rationalistic minds of the neo-classical era. His literary forms are clear-cut and have a perfection not attained by anyone else of his time, the closed couplet reaching a limit beyond which further progress was impossible.

The fact that Pope was not quick to attack his enemies—in spite of much provocation, from 1717 to 1728 he kept silence[1]—would indicate that it was not hot rage that inspired his writings when at last he did burst into satire. The iniquity of these attacks, of these small poets and bad critics maligning the most brilliant poet of his generation—Pope was as well aware of his superiority as his best critics—offered him a subject for a universal satire. His personal anger was transformed into art; experience was sublimated into truth made vital by emotion. There were times, it is true, in which he ceased to be both a gentleman and a poet, as, for instance, when he said nasty things about Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey; but for the most part he rose above mere personal antagonisms. He did more than make a laughing-stock of George II, a fool of Dennis, and a dull pedant of Theobald: he grouped about them, and many more besides, satire against dullness in learning and poetry, against pretence to virtue where none was, and against pettiness in mind and conduct. Though he may not have recollected his enmity in a Wordsworthian tranquillity, he did subject it to the shaping power of his imagination so that it came forth as the highest kind of satiric poetry.

Not all of Pope's satire, however, had a personal basis. Though "The Rape of the Lock" was written to appease a quarrel among his friends, so completely did the larger aspects of the subject appeal to him as matter for satire that he quite surpassed his original intention, and as far as the quarrel was concerned, the second state must have been worse than the first. The sacred rites of the lady's toilet, the gallant fopperies of a beau's daily life, the affectations of contemporary verse, the solemn deliberations of statesmen over empires and nymphs, the alleged morals of men and women of fashion, and all the foolish conventions of society—these quite shut out the slight matter of appeasing an angry belle. And, in addition to all this, he gave such attention to form and

[1] George Sherburn: "The Best in Pope," p. xxxvii.

correctness that the "Rape" is the most perfect mock-heroic in the language.

Pope's "Essay on Criticism" may very well be regarded as a manual of the neo-classical school of correctness and common sense. It is an excellent exposition of criticism as it was understood by the formal writers of the century. Here are discussed such subjects as nature, wit, the rules of poetry, the limits of genius, the use and abuse of language, the conceit, and the relation of sound to sense, all of which were tremendously important to the critics of that day. The poem beautifully reconciles the neo-classical ideas of taste and authority: the good taste of many approved writers and critics furnishes the authority, and this is embodied in rules which the poets must follow. The value of the work today lies in its striking aphorisms, brilliant passages, and clever couplets, which have fitted the critical sense of the years so well that many of them have become popular quotations.

Dryden wrote an elegy in memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew, more in praise of an artist and a poet than as a tribute to a friend; but Pope addressed an elegy to an unfortunate lady who even to this day has not been identified, and he put so much feeling into the poem that it must have been prompted either by an unknown love for someone or by Pope's own longing for love. The same may be said of his "Eloisa to Abelard," which is so intense in feeling that it cannot be regarded as a mere exercise in love poetry, and which may have been intended for the eye of Lady Mary Montagu, who, he trusted, might be sympathetic. Perhaps Pope expended in this old love story of the Middle Ages what his poor racked body prevented him from expending in actual life. These two poems are in striking contrast not only to Pope's other poems but also to most of the so-called elegies of the neo-classical school. Not until we come to Cowper do we find such genuine feeling in company with exquisite technique.

As we are told in Spence's "Anecdotes," Pope had intended at one stage of his career to write "an ethic work in four books," but by the time he made this information public he had already abandoned the idea. Only parts of this work appear, as "The Essay on Man" and the "Moral Essays." When he had completed the former, he had demonstrated that he was not a philosophic poet, or rather that he was

less a philosopher than a poet. The poem is based on the fundamental fallacy that "Whatever is, is right," a fallacy which Pope in his daily life and in his satirical poetry never thought of accepting; and it has contradictions of which Pope seemed to be only dimly aware. He held to the mechanistic idea of the universe and yet to freedom of choice as determining morals; he admitted evil but maintained it is part of universal good. Man, he thought, calls that evil which he cannot see as part of the universal scheme in the mind of Infinite Wisdom. Inductively, there is evil in the world, because, so far as we can see, it works harm to man and beast; deductively, there is no evil in the world, because everything is the work of Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Wisdom is all good. And yet, though this logic may be blind, the poetry rises above false syllogisms. There is something almost sublime in the way Pope makes his belief, hand in hand with poetry, lead reason captive and force her to adopt the language of faith. By means of striking analogies, as of the proud steed or the dull ox, he argues that man cannot know the mystery of God's doings:

> Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
> All but the page prescrib'd, their present state.

The poor Indian becomes a poetic figure symbolizing faith in a kind of earthly immortality. Earthquakes and tempests, Borgia and Catiline, are made parallel in a poetic adaptation that almost carries one to a logical conviction. The specific illustrations are heaped up with such skill that the conclusion,

> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right,

seems inescapable.

The second "moral essay" is satire in Pope's most venomous style. It is addressed "To a Lady," whom everyone recognized as Martha Blount and whom Pope cared for more sincerely than for any other woman. But with the exception of the closing lines, the poem expressed his feeling towards womankind with Lady Mary, rather than with Martha, his friend from childhood, as its representative. In it he included various individuals and types and depicted them all on the general principle that "most women have no characters at all,"

or that "ev'ry woman is at heart a rake." The poem is in contrast to his "Elegy" and "Eloisa to Abelard," for in it he vents his spleen against the sex for its physical indifference to him. The essay ends with a charming compliment to Martha Blount and thereby furnishes the balance that characterizes the best satire.

The "Imitations of Horace," the "Epistle of Dr. Arbuthnot," and the "Dunciad" are the high-water mark of Pope's personal satire. Indeed, there was much in him that was akin to Horace, even if he lacked the gracious urbanity of the Latin poet; and the satires and epistles in which Horace voiced his feelings towards his contemporaries admirably suited the temper of this Augustan Englishman. The skill with which he was able to interpret the Rome of Horace's day in terms of the London of his own makes these "Imitations" the best of their kind, in this century if not in all the centuries of English letters. At the same time, the thin disguise furnished an excellent opportunity for some particularly malicious strokes at hated enemies. The "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," which is the prologue to the satires, is probably the most brilliant *apologia pro vita sua* ever penned by an English satirist; in it the poetry of the neo-classical school found its finest expression. The "Dunciad" suffers from the too great inclusiveness of its subject, the poem being cluttered up with dunces. Unlike "MacFlecknoe" it does not centre interest on one man throughout, even though there is a king of dunces; it dissipates it among the great host of poor poets and worse critics that had been snapping at Pope's heels during the main portion of his polemic existence. Furthermore, the first king of the dunces, Lewis Theobald, was not so dull that his "Shakespear Restor'd" did not reveal Pope as a very unscholarly editor of Shakspere. Pope's elevation of Theobald to the Throne of Dulness was a bit of petty revenge for this brilliant and scathing criticism. When he dethroned Theobald in a later edition of the poem, he raised to this lofty eminence Colley Cibber, who was no more dull than Pope was, whatever else he may have been. Here again, personal animus motivated Pope's action, no lofty desire to elevate pretentious conceit.

Early Nature Poets

Although Pope was the dominant influence in English poetry until his death in 1744, and for some years later, a number of lesser poets were writing on various themes and in a manner not always dictated by his authority. Ambrose Philips, who had clashed with him as a writer of pastorals, much worse even than Pope's, anticipated Thomson by means of his "Winter-Piece," a description drawn from his experience in Denmark. It has the false diction of the neo-classical school in full measure, as "No gentle breathing breeze prepares the Spring," but it also has the merit of seeing a wonder in an actual phenomenon of nature and of trying to present it in verse. The heroic couplet is not a good instrument for descriptive detail, and his efforts with it are rather stilted. The Countess of Winchilsea, also, had found in nature a relief from a melancholy bred of her physical condition and her disappointment over the deposition of James II in 1688. A mild melancholy pervades her "Nocturnal Reverie," which shows a love of nature in the twilight beloved of the later romantic poets, and it merges with her love of the retired life, as expressed in her "Petition for an Absolute Retreat." The description is the result of careful observation, so that nature is not only a relief from melancholy but also a thing to be admired and loved for its own sake. "The Tree" is not something to hang figures of speech upon, but an object that gives delight to the poet and the reader. On the other hand, Parnell's nature pictures are intended more as a background for his melancholy than as a relief from it; his funeral yew and charnel house are but settings for gloomy thoughts on death, his nature being the conventional nature of the graveyard school. Even John Dyer, one of the first to write of nature for its own sake, as in "Grongar Hill," slipped into the conventional mediums of melancholy—the ivy-mantled walls, the raven's bleak abode—as well as into praise of the well-known elements that make up the pleasures of retirement: the wanton zephyr, murmuring waters, and the music of birds.

The first poet to make nature the subject of his song and to treat it with an observing and discriminating affection was James Thomson. When he went down from Scotland to

London, he took with him the first draft of his poem, "Winter,' which later became the last of the series "The Seasons." It is infused with the contemporaneous melancholy, the gloom of winter, as Thomson knew it in his native land, emphasizing the mood. The analogy between winter and death runs through the poem, for Thomson had seen enough of the hardships of a Scotch winter to know that the connection was more than analogical. But the actual scenes he depicted were the remembrance of an observing eye and a sympathetic intelligence. He took a certain joy in winter, as he did in all the seasons, even though he does in the later version use it as an occasion to moralize on the indifference of "the gay, licentious proud" towards those who go down to death amid the terrors of the storm, or who suffer in dungeon glooms. The late version of "Winter" changes from realistic descriptions, in themselves sufficient, to descriptions used to set off moralistic episodes and digressions; the love of nature that inspired the earlier work gave way to the prevailing didacticism, and poetry was overlaid with pseudo-philosophy. As Dr. Myra Reynolds has pointed out, in "The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry" (pp. 329 ff.), many young poets came fresh from the country to London and wrote at first of what they knew, but as they came under the influence of city life and the literary coteries, nature faded out of their poems—and, for the most part, poetry also. Also, in the "Seasons" there is a considerable element of sensibility that shows Thomson as able to understand and feel the beauty as well as the terror of nature; but this element runs over frequently into sentimentalism, especially in the later "Seasons." Thus, in subject matter and treatment, Thomson both belonged to, and was in advance of, his age.

In his metrical form, also, Thomson both belonged to, and was in advance of, his age. For instead of adopting the popular heroic couplet, he sought to imitate the blank-verse measures of "Paradise Lost," as in keeping with the dignity of his subject; and yet he constantly used the poetic diction of his time, with all its false emphasis and circumlocutions. Thus, we have reminders of Milton in

> Welcome, kindred glooms!
> Congenial horrors, hail!

and we have the worst neo-classical phrasing in

> The foodless wilds
> Pour forth their brown inhabitants.

But, looking almost at random, we find:

> Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
> The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
> And on the cottage thatcht, or lordly roof,
> Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.

And we realize that a new voice has become the spokesman of nature.

The Later Satire

As the century progressed, the character of satire underwent a change. Not only was there a lessening of personal animus as found in the great satires of Dryden, Pope, and Swift, but also there was less pungency in its expression. As Dr. Bernbaum intimates,[1] this may be due to the progress of sentimentalism and to the fact that this weapon of the neo-classical school had fallen into unskilful hands. In work as early as Edward Young's "Love of Fame," we note a change from the strongly personal criticism of the caustic contemporary, Pope, to more strictly social criticism. Young inveighs against social conditions and the frivolous persons that make up society: "amorous grandmothers" and "misses, ancient in iniquity"; "she-atheists," and that object of satire in all ages, "the modern maid." He is the indignant preacher who sees his congregation heedless of his sermons and indifferent to Christian doctrine as he expounds it:

> Most nymphs a godhead own;
> And nothing but his attributes dethrone.
> From atheists far, they steadfastly believe
> God is, and is almighty—to forgive.

We are reminded of the fashionable lady who held God too much of a gentleman to send her to hell.

Dr. Johnson had much of the vigor of the earlier satirists, but he also dealt more with political and social conditions than with individuals and parties. He himself had suffered

[1] "English Poets of the Eighteenth Century," p. xxxi.

not so much at the hands of particular persons, like Lord Chesterfield, as from the system by which a man of letters earned his living. So he cried out against the frustration of the scholar's ambition by

Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.

He saw the futility of the warrior's effort after immortality, an effort which serves merely

To point a moral, or adorn a tale.

All striving but reveals to him the vanity of human wishes. What has become of the great ones of his time? Marlborough sinks into dotage, and Swift "expires a drivler and a show." Length of days, physical beauty—all that men long for and strive for—are but a delusion; they bring disease, disappointment, infamy. There is nothing but submission to the will of God; if one would find any consolation for having been born, one must believe of God that "whate'er he gives, he gives the best"—a conclusion of ironical significance, in the light of the many examples Johnson furnishes of what life offers. We are to implore Heaven for love and patience and

faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature's signal for retreat.

This is pessimism as gloomy as anything in Swift, but Johnson holds more sympathy for the victims of life than does this earlier satirist.

Goldsmith was too easy-going to look upon conditions with the bitterness of Johnson, and since he allowed his abundant humor to light up his satire, there is a playfulness in his criticism of contemporary life that marks him off from the fighting satirists of the first half of the century. He lamented the passing away of the "bold peasantry, their country's pride," before the capitalistic methods of the new era; for an economic order in which "wealth accumulates and men decay" had replaced the old Arcadian simplicity. The village parson, who was the presiding genius of the former loveliness of the village, and the schoolmaster, who being a schoolmaster could not be remembered without a tolerant smile at his eccentricities and outworn jokes, are presented with a loving sympathy far removed from the caustic satire of Pope. The same quiet satire pervades Goldsmith's

"Retaliation," the personal basis of which did no more than furnish an occasion for cheerful badinage.

Cowper's satire was mild, like the man himself. Deeply religious, he looked upon the wickedness of the world, war, man's inhumanity to man, slavery, and oppression as symbolized by the Bastile, as cause for grief. Like the stricken deer, he would flee from the world of strife and seek a "lodge in some vast wilderness"; he would not fight like Swift. All his satire is colored by his humanitarianism, which at times does not differ from sentimentalism.

It was this mildness of temper, this approach to the sentimental in both Goldsmith and Cowper, that met a very realistic contrast in the satire of Crabbe. He would have none of your parsons, "passing rich on forty pounds a year," nor idyllic villagers that sported on the green; for if they might all fit very well in a pretty poem, they did not fit in with the cold facts. The peasant had a hard life of it, and the doctor and the parson were a selfish couple, equally indifferent whether their patient survived or died and went to hell. The "tinsel trappings of poetic pride" are poor protection against poverty, disease, and a miserable death. The poor-house is always in the offing, and the pauper's grave too frequently a grim reality.

Burns's satire is far removed from the political propaganda of "Absalom and Achitophel," the bitter personal attacks of "The Dunciad," the savage mockery of "The Death of Dr. Swift," and the disillusionment of "The Vanity of Human Wishes." He attacked persons and conditions, hypocrisy and bigotry, superstition and pride in birth or learning, but did it with such abundant humor that there is no sign of rancour on the part of the satirist. He was so vastly superior to the characters who furnished occasion for his satire that one cannot conceive of him as in the least disturbed by their attitude toward him. Far more truly than Pope he could say that these persons were his diversion. They all lent themselves so readily to ridicule that Burns had but to portray them to the life, and there they were, immortal caricatures.

Poetry of Retirement and Melancholy

The themes of retirement and melancholy, which had already appeared in the poems of Lady Winchilsea, Parnell, Thomson,

and others, received greater emphasis in the poetry of the Wartons, Blair, and Young in the mid-years of the century. These poets raised the themes from incidents to complete topics. Joseph Warton's "The Enthusiast: or, the Love of Nature," which was written in 1740 and published in 1746, combines the idea of retirement with that of primitivism, which though hard is free from the commercialism and wars of civilization. Nature is very romantic in its pristine beauty, its strangeness and mystery, and its implication of the supernatural—of "dæmons and goblins," shrieking through the dark air. And it is the poet's desire to become like the dark savage, far from "the distant din of the tumultuous world." Here he expressed the same sentiment as the anonymous writer of "The Happy Savage" (1732), who, when Pope was declaring that the "proper study of mankind is man," declared

> Oh, happy he who never saw the face
> Of man, nor heard the sound of human voice!

Warton also, in his "Ode to Solitude," quite after the manner of "Il Penseroso," addressed Solitude as a melancholy figure walking forth "at deep dead of night,"

> beneath the moon's pale light
> In robe of flowing black array'd.

His "Ode to Evening," as Miss Reed points out,[1] anticipated Gray's "Elegy" and paralleled Collins's "To Evening" in the mild melancholy of the nature scenery.

Thomas Warton's "The Pleasures of Melancholy" developed the same themes. Here are all the properties of the melancholy *mise-en scène*—the ruined abbey in the moonlight, the lone screech-owl's note, the gloomy walk of pines, the hollow charnel and its ghostly shapes, "at distance seen." While awake at midnight, the poet prays for visions such as Spenser and Milton beheld. At another time he summons up "pale December's foggy glooms" in order that he may the better retire to his chamber and meditate on solemn themes as gathered from books or from scenes "where with his brother Horror, Ruin sits." In this melancholy poetry there is apparent a mingling of two elements, a love of nature and

[1] "Background of Gray's Elegy," p. 184.

a love of man, one romantic in its mild beauty or its horror, the other humanitarian, often becoming sentimental. The models are Shakspere and Milton, and the metrical forms are blank verse and the octosyllabic lines of "Il Penseroso"; in these respects a break is marked from the quatrains and the heroic couplets of Dryden and Pope.

The men who gave the greatest vogue to this melancholy poetry were Robert Blair and Edward Young, and Blair's poem, "The Grave," has the distinction of giving it the name, "the Graveyard School." Their melancholy was of a religious cast and therefore differed from that of the Wartons and many of their lesser contemporaries, although the religion that runs through these poems is most orthodox. Blair was the son-in-law of William Law, and his poem was in harmony with Law's "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life." He incorporated in his work all the mortuary thoughts he could gather from Shakspere, Milton, Addison's essays, Parnell, and others. The poem is a meditation on death and the grave, on the vanity of human wishes, on the universal fear of death and the strange parallel fact that all men think all men mortal but themselves; on the presence of death in this world through sin by the fall of man, and on the eventual overthrow of the king of terrors by the Son of God—death, thereby, becoming the gateway to eternal life. So the poem seems to end in triumph over the defeat of death, as an orthodox poem should, but it is more like the happy ending of what should be a tragedy, the interest throughout is in death, in its horror and its inevitableness.

Young's "The Complaint; or, Night Thoughts," which was composed after Blair's "Grave" but was published in part the year before (1742), rose into sudden popularity and carried "The Grave" along with it, a fact which shows how avid the general public were for gloomy thoughts on life, death, and immortality. Young's absorption in his own melancholy contemplations, in striking contrast to Thomson's healthy, if also lazy, enjoyment of life; and also his poetical, almost professional, use of melancholy, pervade this work and make him the leader of the pageant of bleeding hearts that rolls solemnly through the literature of the pre-romantic and romantic school. On the other hand, he is the inheritor of the puritanic tradition that man's first duty is to save his own soul,

though it be with groanings that cannot, or sometimes can, be uttered. His treatment of nature, as Miss Reed observes,[1] is subjective and "amounts to pathetic fallacy . . . Henceforward, melancholy remains indissolubly united to the shadows of evening, the darkness of midnight, or to the moonlight falling from a clear heaven By his philosophy, then, Young recalls the religious melancholy of the seventeenth century; in his treatment of nature, he is influenced by the growing fondness of readers for description, but narrows his choice of scenes to such as may appropriately be viewed through a mist of tears."

An important development in form appeared in the "Love Elegies" of James Hammon, which were written in 1732 but not published till 1742. These elegies used the alternating riming pentameter quatrain and made it the fashionable form for the elegy. Shenstone wrote twenty-six elegies in this measure and prepared the way still further for the supreme accomplishment of Gray's "Elegy." Gray's poem is the heir of all the poems on solitude, on retirement, on evening, and on the grave, but at the same time it is so completely the result of his observation of life and nature that it ranks as the great product of an original genius. The perfection of metrical detail and the exquisite diction, which though not entirely free from the faults of the period (e.g., "Let not Ambition mock their useful toil," and "No children run to lisp their sire's return") reached the high-water mark in pre-romantic poetry, and also the loveliness of the feeling, make the poem one of the greatest lyrics of the century.

A similar elegiac tenderness is found in Collins's "Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline," "How Sleep the Brave," "Ode to Evening," and "Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson." In all of these we see the popular melancholy given a nobler expression than appears in the work of any other eighteenth-century writer except Gray. Collins's range of subject is limited, but his poetry has delicacy, sincerity, and genuine emotion.

Back to the Middle Ages

One of the tendencies that pointed away from the neoclassic to the romantic was the interest in ballads and similar

[1] "Background of Gray's Elegy," p. 194.

poems, which manifested itself early in the eighteenth century. Addison had expressed his somewhat apologetic admiration for "Chevy Chase" in two *Spectator* papers in 1711. Allan Ramsay had published two collections of verse, which he called "The Tea-Table Miscellany" (1714–40) and "The Evergreen" (1724). Some of the poems in these publications were genuine ballads, some were narrative poems that tried to palm themselves off as actual folk-ballads, others were adaptations or revisions of ballads, and still others were poems taken from other sources or composed by the editor. Pieces like Hamilton of Bangour's "The Braes of Yarrow" have the genuine quality of the primitive ballad. On the other hand, Tickell's "Colin and Lucy" was in imitation of the type, but how far it fell short of the simple diction of its model may be seen in such lines as

> Confusion, shame, remorse, despair
> At once his bosom swell.

Similarly, Gay's "Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Eyed Susan" may have been suggested by the ballad form, but it did not escape the neo-classic influence, as in

> Her lessening boat, unwilling rows to land.

And still further removed from the genuine ballad is Henry Carey's "Ballad of Sally in our Alley," which assuredly owes none of its charm to its affinity with folk poetry.

The publication of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" (1765) gave a renewed impetus to the collecting of ballads and an increased interest in the literature of the folk and its romantic associations. In each successive collection, there was an increased attention to scholarly editing, from the "ballad and water" of Percy to the textual fidelity of Ritson and Scott. Poems were being written particularly by the Scotch on themes of simple, sure effect, like those that characterized the ballads. These dealt with old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago (Jane Elliot's "The Flowers of the Forest"), or with some familiar matter of today (Lady Anne Lindsay's "Auld Robin Gray"). And so they led up to the poems and songs of Burns and Scott. These poems were part of the general reaction from the formality and sophistication of an urban literature to the simplicity and

directness of the poetry of the folk, a reaction which also manifested itself as a return to mediaevalism, particularly in the latter half of the century.

The most amazing exhibition of the harking back to mediaevalism was the publication in 1760 of a translation of the alleged poems of Ossian, by James Macpherson. This Ossian, who according to Macpherson was a Gaelic poet of the third century, A.D., sang the battles of the Gaelic warriors against the Roman legions. The songs that told of these events had been transmitted through fifteen centuries by oral tradition and were now gathered by this industrious Scot from the lips of Gaelic peasants. He pretended that his prose translation was faithfully done from the "genuine remains of ancient Scottish poetry," and for a while nearly the whole literary public believed him. The work fitted in admirably with the current sentimentalism. Here were displayed all the virtues of the simple life, far removed from the enervating influences of institutional civilization: in these primitive conditions, the natural goodness of man was free to assert itself, and the poetry produced by this simple man would be noble and beautiful also: the heroes were magnanimous, the heroines lovely, and all fitted harmoniously into a charming natural background. The learned world greeted Macpherson's prose as equal to Homer's verse, although Dr. Johnson, not being a sentimentalist, belligerently refused to accept Macpherson's word or to admire his translation; and they were so delighted with the lovely aspects of nature depicted in this work—with its soft melancholy, its sublime grandeur, and its awful wildness—that this view of nature was carried over into the poetry of the next century.

The poetical work of Gray represents in a small compass the progress of the century from neo-classicism to romanticism. His "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" has the moralistic note of Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes": only in ignorant youth is happiness to be found, and soon these carefree boys will be the victims of "black Misfortune's baleful train"—just as soon as they go out into the world. The "Elegy" is partly neo-classic in its conventional moralizing, that death is the end of all human endeavor, that "The paths of glory lead but to the grave," and that ignorance and poverty prevent the blooming of potential genius whether

in art or in politics; but it is also romantic in the fine flavor of its melancholy and the sympathetic treatment of nature. The Pindaric odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard," are far more romantic than neo-classic, since they make an enthusiastic excursion into primitive and wild and unfamiliar scenes and deal with supernatural or imaginary beings. The final stage of Gray's development is seen in his "Fatal Sisters," "The Descent of Odin," and "The Triumphs of Owen," in which he takes over a new mythology, either Norse or Welsh, and treats it in a highly romantic manner. We do not wonder that he was profoundly impressed by the Ossianic poems when they appeared in their alleged translation by Macpherson, for his later poems show a similar although not a sentimental interest in a newly discovered past, whether mythological or pseudo-historical.

In somewhat the same way, Collins combined the qualities of the neo-classicist and the romanticist as he progressed from his early poems to his remarkably prophetic "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland." This ode was composed in 1749, and although, not having been published until 1788, it cannot be said to have influenced the romantic poetry of that generation, it may be considered a catalogue of romantic themes to be found in the poetry of the second half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth. Collins saw the opportunities for romantic verse in folklore, the primitive songs of an unsophisticated people, wild nature, the supernatural, and tragedy in fact and story, and these opportunities were realized in the later odes of Gray, the so-called Ossianic translations, the songs and ballads of the Scotch poets before Burns, and most curiously in the Rowley poems of Chatterton.

Chatterton took advantage of the current interest in things mediaeval to fabricate Middle English poems, which he alleged had been written in the fifteenth century and which he himself had discovered. The language was bogus Middle English, and the thought was in keeping with the current sentimental idealism, which depicted the mediaeval age as being simple and unsophisticated and possessing virtues similar to those found in Macpherson's Ossianic society. The form and the content were equally unmediaeval, but were both quite in keeping with the pre-romantic tendencies of the age. The pity

is that what is really fine poetry should be so disguised that it has to be read with a glossary of Chattertonian terms.

The Religious Revival: Cowper

When John Wesley and a group of young men in Oxford met regularly in each other's rooms in 1729 for meditation and prayer, thereby winning for themselves the nickname of Methodists, they started a religious movement which grew in strength until, towards the end of the century, it led to the breaking away from the Anglican Church of the followers of Wesley and to the establishing of the Methodists as a separate ecclesiastical body. The English Church had been concerned more with fighting the Deists on matters of theology than with upholding religion, for in the eyes of the bishops and other clergy, orthodoxy was more important than piety. Wesley's work was, therefore, almost entirely among the humble folk, those whom the church neglected; and he traveled up and down the land for thousands of miles, preaching the gospel to the miners and artisans who assembled in the fields to hear him and his co-worker, Whitefield. The orthodox clergy were hostile; the laity, who followed reason and common sense, were contemptuous of all enthusiasm, especially of the religious kind—and these Methodists were consumed with the zeal of the Lord. It took some time, therefore, for this new emotionalism to reach the upper classes in society and the church, but when it did, it brought about a revival as sincere as that outside its gates. The regeneration of the individual soul is seen in the "Night Thoughts" of Edward Young, and it blazes forth in Christopher Smart's wonderful "Song to David." This revival of religion corresponded to the new love of nature and of man. It was a stirring of the emotions, an awakening of the national conscience, a renascence of humanitarianism, an appeal to the heart of man. It was an undercurrent in the stream of the romantic movement.

The man who in English poetry best represents this revival of religion is William Cowper. He had come under the influence of thorough-going Calvinism and had morbid fears that he had committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. These fears developed into temporary insanity, suicidal in its nature. He was saved by his retirement into the country and by an occupation which gave vent to his fine

creative powers. He found an outlet for his religious emotionalism in his hymns, many of which have the melancholy theme that life is naught, that the only hope for man is in the next world—that salvation can be had only through the blood of the Lamb, without which there is nothing but hell, and a very real, material hell, for the damned. It is not surprising, then, that some of Cowper's hymns are morbid to a degree, as in the ghastly figure of

> There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins.

On the other hand, he rose to his theme of "Light Shining out of Darkness" and produced the fine poem,

> God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;

and he transcended mere sentimentality in the fine sentiment of "Hark, my soul! it is the Lord," and "Oh, for a closer walk with God."

The melancholy of Cowper's life runs through his poignantly personal tribute to his mother, "On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk," in which he speaks of himself as "Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child." It is no poetical exercise in the melancholy manner. The same mood, but more sombre, characterizes "The Castaway," for here is a melancholy worse than death. A more tender and elusive melancholy pervades the loving verses "To Mary," in which he paid beautiful respect to Mrs. Unwin as his stay and support through twenty years and his sole comfort for the future.

Cowper strikes a more cheerful note in "The Task," his most ambitious poem and the best of his long pieces. It has, in his own words, "one tendency; to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure, as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue." He depicted the charms of country life with the same close observation that was already shown in Thomson's "Seasons," but with a much tenderer sympathy. The postman and his twanging horn, the woodman and his dog, the dazzling splendor of the mid-day scene, the charming seclusion of a winter evening—

> Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round, ...
> So let us welcome peaceful evening in

—all these are presented with such sincerity and tenderness that they anticipate certain aspects of Wordsworth's poetry. Like Wordsworth, he shut out the grim side of nature, but unlike him he adopted an easy optimism that a benevolent Deity

> shall descend
> Propitious in his chariot paved with love;
> And what his storms have blasted and defaced
> For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Cowper had gone through a great tribulation that, as for Wordsworth, had humanized his soul. He linked his love of nature with his love of man, and although he could not fuse them in that ecstasy of Wordsworth, he, more than any other poet of the eighteenth century, prepared the way for the great poet of man and nature of the early nineteenth. And yet, with all his inferiority to Wordsworth, he did what the later poet could never do—he wrote the rollicking verses on "The Diverting History of John Gilpin"!

Burns and Blake

Macpherson summoned out of the Gaelic mists of the third century his primitive bard Ossian, and he made him sing songs strange and yet delightful to eighteenth-century ears. Chatterton came upon the name of Thomas Rowley as he delved among manuscripts in the muniment room of St. Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol, and conceived the brilliant idea of making him a poet and of creating for him poems disguised in pseudo-Middle English. Rowley was to the current consciousness a primitive bard, though he really was more of the eighteenth than of the fifteenth century. Beattie gave a purely imaginative existence to his primitive minstrel Edwin, whose "daily teachers had been woods and rills," like Wordsworth's Lord Clifford, but whose poetic thought was penetrated by the prevailing sensibility of Beattie's time.

It remained for Scotland to give form and substance to these visions of the imagination, in the being of Robert Burns. He

had been born and brought up far from the culture of the town; he had known no teachers beyond those the village supplied; his poetic education came from his reading in the English classics and the Scotch poets—enough, one might venture, for a genius;—and he wrote the most inspired poems of the century. The sensibility of his age was lifted into the realm of poetry. In several respects Burns may be said to be the culmination of the literary movements of the century. We have seen that in satire he was in the line of succession from Dryden onward, and that like his predecessors he attacked hypocrisy, false pride, superstition, hollow piety, and pretentiousness. He is the poet of tender sensibility, sometimes akin to melancholy, in "To a Mouse," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and his more serious love poems. He gave the *coup de grace* to the graveyard school in the rollicking fun of "Tam O'Shanter" and the mock seriousness of the "Address to the Deil." He went to the opposite extreme from Cowper and made a farce out of the Calvinistic means of salvation in his "Holy Fair." His songs owed their being in part to the song-writers who for half a century had been filling the countryside with their poems in the Scots dialect and had kept the lyric alive there while it had pretty nearly expired in England. The tunes existed, and Burns wrote new words to them; or he revised old songs, retaining a few lines or a stanza or two; or he created a new poem out of several others on a similar theme.

Burns's best poetry is usually in dialect, in his natural speech, but occasionally he composed a stanza in practically pure English and at the same time made matchless verse. The best stanza of "Ae Fond Kiss" is virtually free of dialect:

> Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
> Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
> Never met—or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

On the other hand, by far the best of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is in Scots, whereas the moralizing is in the neo-classic manner. All the rollicking fun of "Tam O'Shanter" is in dialect, and the one piece in the native speech that is not—

> But pleasures are like poppies spread—
> You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed

—is either "a patch of cheap silk upon honest homespun," as Neilson says[1] or, as this editor thinks, a bit of conscious grotesquerie which Burns with his tongue in his cheek brought in simply as moralizing. When he dropped into classical English, he too often became a Scots preacher with a southern education. All Scotchmen—and Burns was no exception—dearly love a sermon. His moral poems are in the manner as well as in the language of Goldsmith. He adopted likewise the sentimentalism of the later years of the century, and in doing so wrote as he thought a moralist should, not as the inspired poet of the songs and the satires.

Blake may very properly be regarded as the first of the romantics. Both in form and in content, he departed from the neo-classicists and came directly under the influence of the pre-romantics. As a boy he saw visions, as that of "the prophet Ezekiel under a tree in the fields." At an early age he became an enthusiastic devotee of Gothic art while he worked among the tombs in Westminster Abbey. His reading was in the Elizabethans and Milton, Chatterton's Rowley poems, Percy's "Reliques," and Macpherson's "Ossian"; he deliberately turned his back on the neo-classic writers. The principles of order and reason as governing thought and form he would have none of, whether in his life or in his art. All was imagination. As he said in a letter to Trussler in August, 1799, "I know that this world is a world of imagination and vision . . . To the eyes of the man of imagination, Nature is Imagination . . . To me this world is all one continued vision of fancy or imagination."[2] He was an individualist and a revolutionist, thoroughly in sympathy with the French in 1789. Like Godwin later, he rebelled against certain human institutions, such as marriage and the church, which stood in the way of freedom in thought and conduct. He was entirely in sympathy with the humanitarian movements of the latter part of this century and the beginning of the next, and his hatred of religious bigotry was as bitter as Burns's ridicule of it was humorous.

The note struck in "To Spring" in the "Poetical Sketches" of 1783—

[1] "Burns, How to Know Him," p. 256.
[2] Quoted by Bruce, "William Blake in This World," p. 114.

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

—is as far removed from the poetry of reason as anything in the romantic poets of the early nineteenth century. It is carried through the "Songs of Experience," as in

Ah, Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after the sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller's journey is done.

And it reached its culmination in the long symbolic poems of the Prophetic Books. In the matter of metrical form there is a corresponding departure from the poetic diction and the conventionalized couplet and quatrain of the school of Pope. It ranges from the delectable rimed stanzas of the "Introduction to the Songs of Innocence" to the unrimed iambic heptameters of "The Book of Thel," and always with a marvellous consonance of form and matter.

Blake did not die until 1827, when the poetry of the romantics was ended either by death, as was the fate of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, or by the drying up of the springs of song, as in Wordsworth and Coleridge. His poems became mystical and obscure as he went over more and more into symbolism, even while the young poets of the romantic movement were bringing a new interpretation of the problems that had been engaging the thoughts of the pre-romantics. The themes of melancholy and retirement were reaching noble expression in the work of Byron and Keats; the supernatural was being accepted with poetic faith in the poems of Coleridge; and nature was offering a new meaning in the poetry of Wordsworth. Further, individualism was being heard in the voices of Shelley and Byron; beauty in its essential loveliness was becoming resplendent in the work of Keats and Shelley; and a finer humanitarianism was being linked with a love of nature and of God in the best poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The rule of order and reason and common sense was, indeed, giving way to the prompting of the imagination in the search for truth and beauty.

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another controversial poem, not nearly as good, called "The Medal," which Thomas Shadwell ridiculed in "The Medal of John Bayes" ("John Bayes" was the name given Dryden in "The Rehearsal"). This year a piratical printer with an eye to business rather than to morals brought out "MacFlecknoe" as by the author of "Absalom and Achitophel." This poem was Dryden's famous attack on Shadwell, whom he satirized as the dullest of poets, and whom he exalted as the only worthy successor of Flecknoe, the absolute ruler of the realms of nonsense. It may have been written as early as 1678, since there is nothing in it to connect it with the politics or conduct of Shadwell in 1682. Also, Dryden added a purple patch of two hundred lines to Nahum Tate's drab "Second Part of 'Absalom and Achitophel.'"

In the same year, 1682, Dryden wrote "Religio Laici," which is more political than religious in its defense of the Anglican church against the seditious fanatics and schismatics of Protestantism on one hand and the foreign tyranny of the Papists on the other. Dryden was not a man of deep religious convictions, and when it became a choice between loyalty to any one church and loyalty to the throne, he stood by the King. When James II ascended the throne as an acknowledged Catholic, Dryden declared himself of the same faith, and in 1687 he brought out his "Hind and the Panther," a defense of the Catholic Church, which again was more a political than a religious argument, since his thesis was that the Catholic Church, being free of fanatical sects, was better able to guarantee national peace. The Revolution of 1688 caused Dryden to lose all his offices, but it also took him out of the troubled atmosphere of public life. He remained a Catholic to the end and gave himself up to purely literary pursuits. He busied himself with translations of Persius, Juvenal, Ovid, Vergil, and Homer. He wrote his fine ode, "Alexander's Feast," in 1697, ten years after his similar "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day." He modernized Chaucer and retold some stories from Boccaccio for a volume, "Fables Ancient and Modern," to which he prefixed his charming apologia for his life and work. He died in the early morning of May Day, 1700, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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Absalom and Achitophel

A Poem

Si proprius stes
Te capiet magis.[1]

To the Reader

'Tis not my intention to make an apology for my poem: some will think it needs no excuse, and others will receive none. The design, I am sure, is honest; but he who draws his pen for one party must expect to make enemies of the other. For wit and fool are consequents of Whig and Tory;[2] and every man is a knave or an ass to the contrary side. There's a treasury of merits in the Fanatic church, as well as in the Papist, and a pennyworth to be had of saintship, honesty, and poetry, for the lewd, the factious, and the blockheads; but the longest chapter in Deuteronomy has not curses enough for an Anti-Bromingham.[3] My comfort is, their manifest prejudice to my cause will render their judgment of less authority against me. Yet if a poem have a genius, it will force its own reception in the world; for there is a sweetness in good verse, which tickles even while it hurts; and no man can be heartily angry with him who pleases him against his will. The commendation of adversaries is the greatest triumph of a writer, because it never comes unless extorted. But I can be satisfied on more easy terms: if I happen to please the more moderate sort, I shall be sure of an honest party and, in all probability, of the best judges; for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And, I confess, I have laid in for those, by rebating[4] the satire, where justice would allow it, from carrying too sharp an edge. They who can criticize so weakly as to imagine I have done my worst,

[1] Motto: "If you stand nearer, it will attract you more."—Horace's "Ars Poetica," 361–2.

[2] Terms first applied in 1679 in the controversy over the Exclusion Bill. Those favoring the Duke of York were called Tories; the Exclusionists were Whigs.

[3] Anti-Whig. Birmingham had a bad reputation for base and counterfeit coinage. The reference is to Monmouth's false claim as the legitimate heir to the throne. Birmingham = Bromingham = Brummagem, "counterfeit."

[4] blunting.

may be convinced at their own cost that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently. I have but laughed at some men's follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended as freely as I have taxed their crimes. And now, if you are a malicious reader, I expect you should return upon me that I affect to be thought more impartial than I am; but if men are not to be judged by their professions, God forgive you commonwealth's-men for professing so plausibly for the government. You cannot be so unconscionable as to charge me for not subscribing of my name; for that would reflect too grossly upon your own party, who never dare, though they have the advantage of a jury to secure them. If you like not my poem, the fault may possibly be in my writing, though 'tis hard for an author to judge against himself; but more probably 'tis in your morals, which cannot bear the truth of it. The violent on both sides will condemn the character of Absalom, as either too favourably or too hardly drawn; but they are not the violent whom I desire to please. The fault on the right hand is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and, to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth, I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man's life, than I would be of his reputation. But since the most excellent natures are always the most easy and, as being such, are the soonest perverted by ill counsels, especially when baited with fame and glory, it is no more a wonder that he withstood not the temptations of Achitophel than it was for Adam not to have resisted the two devils, the serpent and the woman. The conclusion of the story I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out but for a picture to the waist; and if the draught be so far true, it is as much as I designed.

Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconcilement of Absalom to David. And who knows but this may come to pass? Things were not brought to an extremity where I left the story: there seems yet to be room left for a composure; hereafter there may only be for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen, that the Devil himself may at last be saved. For which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit. God is infinitely merciful; and his vicegerent is only not so, because he is not infinite.

The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an

inveterate disease; for those are only in order to prevent the chirurgeon's work of an *Ense rescindendum*,[1] which I wish not to my very enemies. To conclude all; if the body politic have any analogy to the natural, in my weak judgment, an act of oblivion were as necessary in a hot distempered state as an opiate would be in a raging fever.

In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin;
When man on many multiplied his kind,
Ere one to one was cursedly confin'd;
When nature prompted and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
Then Israel's monarch,[2] after Heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did variously impart
To wives and slaves, and, wide as his command,
Scatter'd his Maker's image through the land.
Michal,[3] of royal blood, the crown did wear;
A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
Not so the rest; for several mothers bore
To god-like David several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.
Of all this numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave, as Absalon:[4]
Whether, inspir'd by some diviner lust,
His father got him with a greater gust;
Or that his conscious destiny made way
By manly beauty to imperial sway.
Early in foreign fields he won renown
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please.
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And Paradise was open'd in his face.
With secret joy, indulgent David view'd
His youthful image in his son renew'd:

[1] what must be cut off with the sword. [2] Charles II, King of England.
[3] Catherine of Portugal, Charles's queen, childless like Michal.
[4] James Scott (1649–1685), Duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch, son of Charles II by Lucy Walters.

To all his wishes nothing he denied;
And made the charming Annabel[1] his bride.
What faults he had, (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.
Some warm excesses, which the law forbore,
Were constru'd youth that purg'd by boiling o'er:
And Amnon's murther, by a specious name,
Was call'd a just revenge for injur'd fame.[2]
Thus prais'd, and lov'd, the noble youth remain'd,
While David, undisturb'd, in Sion[3] reign'd.
But life can never be sincerely blest:
Heav'n punishes the bad, and proves the best.
The Jews,[4] a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,
As ever tried th' extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd people, whom, debauch'd with ease,
No king could govern, nor no God could please;
(Gods they had tried of every shape and size,
That godsmiths could produce or priests devise.)
These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted liberty;
And when no rule, no precedent was found
Of men, by laws less circumscrib'd and bound;
They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
And thought that all but savages were slaves.
They who, when Saul[5] was dead, without a blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth[6] the crown forego;
Who banish'd David did from Hebron[7] bring,
And with a general shout proclaim'd him King:
Those very Jews, who, at their very best,
Their humour more than loyalty exprest,
Now wonder'd why so long they had obey'd
An idol monarch, which their hands had made;
Thought they might ruin him they could create,
Or melt him to that golden calf, a State.[8]

[1] Anne Scott, Countess of Buccleuch, married to Monmouth by the King's orders in 1665.
[2] For Ammon, see II Samuel, xiii, 28ff. The reference is intentionally vague to certain criminal offenses on the part of Monmouth.
[3] London. [4] the English. [5] Oliver Cromwell. [6] Richard Cromwell.
[7] Scotland, where Charles had been crowned January 1, 1651. So David reigned in Hebron before he reigned in Jerusalem. See II Samuel, v, 4.
[8] a republic.

But these were random bolts; no form'd design,
Nor interest made the factious crowd to join:
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign;
And, looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw seams of wounds, dishonest to the sight;
In contemplation of whose ugly scars,
They curs'd the memory of civil wars.
The moderate sort of men, thus qualified,
Inclin'd the balance to the better side;
And David's mildness manag'd it so well,
The bad found no occasion to rebel.
But when to sin our bias'd nature leans,
The careful Devil is still at hand with means;
And providently pimps for ill desires:
The good old cause reviv'd, a plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up commonwealths and ruin kings.

Th' inhabitants of old Jerusalem,[1]
Were Jebusites:[2] the town so call'd from them;
And theirs the native right—
But when the chosen people[3] grew more strong,
The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus, worn and weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's government:
Impoverish'd, and depriv'd of all command,
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land,
And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
Their gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common wood.
This set the heathen priesthood in a flame;
For priests of all religions are the same:
Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his servants are as bold
As if he had been born of beaten gold.
The Jewish Rabbins[4] though their enemies,

[1] London.
[2] Roman Catholics.
[3] the Protestants
[4] Doctors of the Church of England.

In this conclude them honest men and wise:
For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,
T' espouse his cause by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that Plot,[1] the nation's curse,
Bad in itself, but represented worse;
Rais'd in extremes, and in extremes decried;
With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows denied;
Not weigh'd or winnow'd by the multitude;
But swallow'd in the mass, unchew'd and crude.
Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing or believing all.
Th' Egyptian[2] rites the Jebusites embrac'd,
Where gods were recommended by their taste.
Such sav'ry deities must needs be good,
As serv'd at once for worship and for food.
By force they could not introduce these gods,
For ten to one in former days was odds:
So fraud was us'd, (the sacrificer's trade,)
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,
And rak'd for converts even the court and stews:
Which Hebrew priests[3] the more unkindly took,
Because the fleece accompanies the flock.
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay
By guns, invented since full many a day:
Our author swears it not; but who can know
How far the Devil and Jebusites may go?
This plot, which fail'd for want of common sense,
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence;
For, as when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood;
And ev'ry hostile humour, which before
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;

[1] The *Popish Plot* of Titus Oates and his accomplices, who swore that the Catholics were plotting the murder of Charles and the seizure of the government (1678).

[2] French, since France was the leading Roman Catholic country in the eyes of the English. The satire is on transubstantiation.

[3] the Anglican clergy.

So several factions from this first ferment
Work up to foam, and threat the government.
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,
Oppos'd the pow'r to which they could not rise.
Some had in courts been great, and thrown from thence,
Like fiends were harden'd in impenitence.
Some, by their Monarch's fatal mercy, grown
From pardon'd rebels kinsmen to the throne,
Were rais'd in pow'r and public office high;
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.
Of these the false Achitophel[1] was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeather'd two-legg'd thing, a son;
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the state;

[1] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1621–1683). He had been Lord Chancellor (1672–3) and President of the Council (1679). For supporting Monmouth as Charles's successor to the throne he was charged with high treason a few months before "Absalom and Achitophel" appeared (1681). The grand jury threw out the bill against him shortly after the publication of the poem, and he was released on November 24.

To compass this the triple bond[1] he broke;
The pillars of the public safety shook;
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke:
Then seiz'd with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times,[2]
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will!
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own!
Yet fame deserv'd no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin[3]
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean;
Unbrib'd, unsought, the wretched to redress;
Swift of despatch, and easy of access.
O, had he been content to serve the crown,
With virtues only proper to the gown;
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle, that oppress'd the noble seed;
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And Heav'n had wanted one immortal song.
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And Fortune's ice prefers to Virtue's land.
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
Now, manifest of[4] crimes contriv'd long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his Prince;
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulk'd behind the laws.
The wish'd occasion of the Plot he takes;
Some circumstances finds, but more he makes.
By buzzing emissaries fills the ears

[1] The triple bond of England, Holland, and Sweden, formed against France in 1667, was broken when Charles made a secret treaty with France against Holland in 1670.

[2] Lines 180–191 were added in the second edition, after the release of Shaftesbury from prison.

[3] chief justice. [4] plainly convicted of.

Of list'ning crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the King himself a Jebusite.
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
Were strong with people easy to rebel.
For, govern'd by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the prime renews:
And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord.
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalon:
Not that he wish'd his greatness to create,
(For politicians neither love nor hate,)
But, for he knew his title not allow'd,
Would keep him still depending on the crowd:
That kingly pow'r, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
Him he attempts with studied arts to please,
And sheds his venom in such words as these:

"Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire;
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas, and shows the promis'd land;
Whose dawning day in every distant age
Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage:
The people's pray'r, the glad diviner's theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!
Thee, Saviour, thee, the nation's vows confess,
And, never satisfied with seeing, bless:
Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
Starve and defraud the people of thy reign?
Content ingloriously to pass thy days
Like one of virtue's fools that feeds on praise;

[1] Charles had already as early as 1669 secretly declared himself a Roman Catholic, and in the secret Treaty of Dover (1670) had made an agreement with Louis to establish Catholicism in England.

Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight.
Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate;
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,)
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent:
But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting Folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,
And spreads her locks before her as she flies.
Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him to be King,
At Gath[1] an exile he might still remain,
And Heav'n's anointing oil had been in vain.
Let his successful youth your hopes engage;
But shun th' example of declining age:
Behold him setting in his western skies,
The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.
He is not now, as when, on Jordan's sand[2]
The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
Cov'ring the beach, and black'ning all the strand;
But, like the Prince of Angels, from his height
Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd light;
Betray'd by one poor plot to public scorn,
(Our only blessing since his curst return;)
Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,
Blown off and scatter'd by a puff of wind.
What strength can he to your designs oppose,
Naked of friends, and round beset with foes?
If Pharaoh's[3] doubtful succour he should use,
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring:
Foment the war, but not support the King:
Nor would the royal party e'er unite
With Pharaoh's arms t' assist the Jebusite;
Or, if they should, their interest soon would break,

[1] Brussels. [2] the English shore at Dover. [3] Louis XIV of France.

And with such odious aid make David weak.
All sorts of men, by my successful arts,
Abhorring kings, estrange their alter'd hearts
From David's rule: and 'tis the general cry,
Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.
If you, as champion of the public good,
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
What may not Israel hope, and what applause
Might such a general gain by such a cause?
Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flow'r,
Fair only to the sight, but solid pow'r;
And nobler is a limited command,
Giv'n by the love of all your native land,
Than a successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark."

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds!
Desire of pow'r, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
The ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
Too full of angels' metal in his frame,
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,
Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with praise.
Half loth, and half consenting to the ill,
(For loyal blood within him struggled still,)
He thus replied: "And what pretence have I
To take up arms for public liberty?
My father governs with unquestion'd right;
The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws:
And Heav'n by wonders has espous'd his cause.
Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful reign?
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good;
Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood;
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,

His crime is God's beloved attribute.
What could he gain his people to betray
Or change his right for arbitrary sway?
Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
The dog-star heats their brains to this disease.
Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel and run popularly mad?
Were he a tyrant, who, by lawless might,
Oppress'd the Jews and rais'd the Jebusite,
Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands:
The people might assert their liberty;
But what was right in them were crime in me.
His favour leaves me nothing to require,
Prevents[1] my wishes, and outruns desire;
What more can I expect while David lives?
All but his kingly diadem he gives:
And that"—But there he paus'd, then sighing, said—
"Is justly destin'd for a worthier head.
For when my father from his toils shall rest,
And late augment the number of the blest,
His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
Or the collat'ral line, where that shall end.
His brother,[2] though oppress'd with vulgar spite,
Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,
Of every royal virtue stands possess'd;
Still dear to all the bravest and the best.
His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;
His loyalty the King, the world his fame.
His mercy ev'n th' offending crowd will find;
For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.
Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree,
Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
Yet O that Fate, propitiously inclin'd,
Had rais'd my birth, or had debas'd my mind;
To my large soul, not all her treasure lent,
And then betray'd it to a mean descent!
I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,

[1] anticipates. [2] James, Duke of York, later James II.

And David's part disdains my mother's mould.
Why am I scanted by a niggard birth?
My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth:
And, made for empire, whispers me within,
Desire of greatness is a god-like sin."

Him staggering so when Hell's dire agent found,
While fainting Virtue scarce maintain'd her ground,
He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:
"Th' eternal God, supremely good and wise,
Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain:
What wonders are reserv'd to bless your reign!
Against your will, your arguments have shown,
Such virtue's only giv'n to guide a throne.
Not that your father's mildness I contemn,
But manly force becomes the diadem.
'Tis true he grants the people all they crave;
And more, perhaps, than subjects ought to have:
For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
But when should people strive their bonds to break,
If not when kings are negligent or weak?
Let him give on till he can give no more,
The thrifty Sanhedrin[1] shall keep him poor;
And every shekel which he can receive,
Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.
To ply him with new plots shall be my care;
Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
Which when his treasure can no more supply,
He must, with the remains of kingship, buy.
His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears
Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners;
Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,
He shall be naked left to public scorn.
The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
My arts have made obnoxious to the State;
Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
His right, for sums of necessary gold,
Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold;

[1] Parliament.

Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,
To pass your doubtful title into law:
If not, the people have a right supreme
To make their kings; for kings are made for them.
All empire is no more than pow'r in trust,
Which, when resum'd, can be no longer just.[1]
Succession, for the general good design'd,
In its own wrong a nation cannot bind:
If altering that the people can relieve,
Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
The Jews well know their pow'r: ere Saul they chose
God was their King, and God they durst depose.
Urge now your piety, your filial name,
A father's right, and fear of future fame;
The public good, that universal call,
To which even Heav'n submitted, answers all.
Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
'Tis Nature's trick to propagate her kind.
Our fond begetters, who would never die,
Love but themselves in their posterity.
Or let his kindness by th' effects be tried,
Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
God said He loved your father; could He bring
A better proof than to anoint him King?
It surely show'd, He lov'd the shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
Would David have you thought his darling son?
What means he then, to alienate the crown?
The name of godly he may blush to bear:
'Tis after God's own heart to cheat his heir.[2]
He to his brother gives supreme command,
To you a legacy of barren land:
Perhaps th' old harp, on which he thrums his lays,
Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.
Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
And marks your progress in the people's hearts.

[1] Which, when resumed by the rightful owners, the people, can no longer be justly exercised by the so-called authorities.
[2] The line is ironical.

Though now his mighty soul its grief contains,
He meditates revenge who least complains;
And, like a lion, slumb'ring in the way,
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
His fearless foes within his distance draws,
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws;
Till at the last, his time for fury found,
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground;
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears,
Your case no tame expedients will afford;
Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
Which for no less a stake than life you draw;
And self-defence is Nature's eldest law.
Leave the warm people no considering time;
For then rebellion may be thought a crime.
Prevail[1] yourself of what occasion gives,
But try your title while your father lives;
And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
Proclaim you take them in the King's defence;
Whose sacred life each minute would expose
To plots, from seeming friends, and secret foes.
And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
Perhaps his fear his kindness may control.
He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
For plighted vows too late to be undone.
If so, by force he wishes to be gain'd;
Like women's lechery, to seem constrain'd.
Doubt not: but, when he most affects the frown,
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
Secure his person to secure your cause:
They who possess the Prince, possess the laws."

He said, and this advice above the rest,
With Absalom's mild nature suited best;
Unblam'd of life (ambition set aside,)
Not stain'd with cruelty nor puff'd with pride;
How happy had he been, if Destiny
Had higher plac'd his birth, or not so high!
His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,

[1] a gallicism for "avail."

And blest all other countries but his own.
But charming greatness since so few refuse,
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.
Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,
With blandishments to gain the public love;
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
And popularly prosecute the Plot.
To further this, Achitophel unites
The malcontents of all the Israelites;
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,
For several ends, to serve the same design;
The best, (and of the princes some were such,)
Who thought the pow'r of monarchy too much;
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts;
Not wicked, but seduc'd by impious arts.
By these the springs of property were bent,
And wound so high, they crack'd the government.
The next for interest sought t' embroil the state,
To sell their duty at a dearer rate;
And make their Jewish markets of the throne,
Pretending public good, to serve their own.
Others thought kings an useless heavy load,
Who cost too much, and did too little good.
These were for laying honest David by,
On principles of pure good husbandry.
With them join'd all th' haranguers of the throng,
That thought to get preferment by the tongue.
Who follow next, a double danger bring,
Not only hating David, but the King:
The Solymæan rout,[1] well-vers'd of old
In godly faction, and in treason bold;
Cow'ring and quaking at a conqu'ror's sword;
But lofty to a lawful prince restor'd;
Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot[2] begun,
And scorn'd by Jebusites to be outdone.
Hot Levites[3] headed these; who pull'd before
From th' ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
Resum'd their cant, and with a zealous cry

[1] Solyma is Jerusalem, which here is London.
[2] The Popish Plot.
[3] Presbyterian ministers.

Pursu'd their old belov'd theocracy:
Where Sanhedrin and priest enslav'd the nation,
And justified their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit for reign as Aaron's race,[1]
If once dominion they could found in grace?
These led the pack; though not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the government.
A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed,
Of the true old enthusiastic breed:
'Gainst form and order they their pow'r employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.
But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.
These out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
Ador'd their fathers' God and property;
And by the same blind benefit of Fate,
The Devil and the Jebusite did hate:
Born to be sav'd even in their own despite,
Because they could not help believing right.
Such were the tools; but a whole Hydra more
Remains, of sprouting heads too long to score.
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri[2] stand;
A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both (to show his judgment) in extremes:
So over-violent or over-civil,
That every man, with him, was God or Devil.

[1] the clergy.

[2] George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687), a member of the infamous "Cabal" of 1670. He had satirized Dryden in "The Rehearsal" under the name of Bayes. This portrait is Dryden's revenge.

In squand'ring wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laugh'd himself from Court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel:
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
Of lords, below the dignity of verse.
Wits, warriors, commonwealth's-men, were the best;
Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.
And therefore, in the name of dulness, be
The well-hung Balaam[1] and cold Caleb,[2] free;
And canting Nadab let oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.[3]
Let friendship's holy band some names assure;
Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.
Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace:
Not bull-fac'd Jonas,[4] who could statutes draw
To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
But he, though bad, is follow'd by a worse,
The wretch who Heav'n's anointed dar'd to curse:
Shimei,[5] whose youth did early promise bring
Of zeal to God and hatred to his King,
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,

[1] Well-hung Balaam was the Earl of Huntingdon, brother of the Lord Hastings whose death from smallpox Dryden lamented in a poem worse than the disease. He was a member of the Exclusion party. The epithet is accounted for in the Luttrell MS (Oxford, 1857) and defined in N.E.D.

[2] Cold Caleb was Ford, Lord Grey of Wark, who was involved in notorious scandals then and later.

[3] Canting Nadab, Lord Howard of Escrick, was accused of "having taken the Sacrament when in prison, to assert his innocence, in a mixture of ale and apples called 'lamb's wool' " (*Christie*).

[4] Sir William Jones as Attorney General conducted the prosecution of those involved in the Popish Plot, but later resigned his office and went over to Shaftesbury's party.

[5] For the biblical reference see II Samuel, xvi, 5ff. Shimei is Slingsby Bethel, a sheriff of London in 1680 and a member of Richard Cromwell's Parliament. He was proverbially stingy.

And never broke the Sabbath, but for gain;
Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the government.
Thus heaping wealth, by the most ready way
Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray,
The City, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate.
His hand a vare[1] of justice did uphold;
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.
During his office, treason was no crime;
The sons of Belial had a glorious time;
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
Yet lov'd his wicked neighbour as himself.
When two or three were gather'd to declaim
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them;
And if they curs'd the King when he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company.
If any durst his factious friends accuse,
He pack'd a jury of dissenting Jews;
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
Would free the suff'ring saint from human laws.
For laws are only made to punish those
Who serve the King, and to protect his foes.
If any leisure time he had from pow'r,
(Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour,)
His bus'ness was, by writing, to persuade
That kings were useless, and a clog to trade;
And, that his noble style he might refine,
No Rechabite[2] more shunn'd the fumes of wine.
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval board
The grossness of a city feast abhorr'd:
His cooks, with long disuse, their trade forgot;
Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews;
For towns once burnt such magistrates require

[1] a wand.

[2] "But they said, we will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever."—Jeremiah, xxxv, 6.

As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.
With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel:
And Moses' laws he held in more account,
For forty days of fasting in the mount.
To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
Would tire a well-breath'd witness of the Plot.
Yet, Corah,[1] thou shalt from oblivion pass:
Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
High as the serpent of thy metal made,
While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.[2]
What though his birth were base, yet comets rise
From earthy vapours, ere they shine in skies.
Prodigious actions may as well be done
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.
This arch-attester for the public good
By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
Who ever ask'd the witnesses' high race,
Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace?
Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.
Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither choleric was nor proud:
His long chin prov'd his wit, his saint-like grace
A church vermilion, and a Moses' face.[3]
His memory, miraculously great,
Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.
Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But where the witness fail'd, the prophet spoke:
Some things like visionary flights appear;
The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where;
And gave him his Rabbinical degree,[4]

[1] Titus Oates (1649–1705), the son of an Anabaptist ribbon-weaver. He took orders in the Church of England, was suspended, and went over to Catholicism. He concocted the story of the Popish Plot and was given a pension of £1200.

[2] See Numbers, xxi, 6, 8.

[3] The rubicund complexion of the ecclesiast and the shining face of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai. See Exodus, xxxiv, 29.

[4] The degree of Doctor of Divinity, Oates alleged, had been conferred upon him by the University of Salamanca.

Unknown to foreign University.
His judgment yet his mem'ry did excel;
Which piec'd his wondrous evidence so well,
And suited to the temper of the times,
Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
Let Israel's foes suspect his heav'nly call,
And rashly judge his writ apocryphal;
Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made:
He takes his life, who takes away his trade.
Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace,
Should whet my memory, though once forgot,
To make him an appendix of my plot.
His zeal to Heav'n made him his Prince despise,
And load his person with indignities;
But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
Indulging latitude to deeds and words;
And Corah might for Agag's[1] murder call,
In terms as coarse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
What others in his evidence did join,
(The best that could be had for love or coin,)
In Corah's own predicament will fall;
For Witness is a common name to all.

Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom forsakes the court;
Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,
And fir'd with near possession of a crown.
Th' admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes.
His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show,
On each side bowing popularly low;
His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,
And with familiar ease repeats their names.
Thus form'd by nature, furnish'd out with arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.

[1] Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey (1621–1678), before whom Oates had testified on oath about the Popish Plot, was found murdered soon afterwards on Primrose Hill. The murderer was never discovered, but Dryden insinuates that the deed was instigated by Oates, since Godfrey unwillingly took his deposition and was therefore regarded as friendly to the Catholics. For Agag, see I Samuel, xv.

Then, with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
Few words he said; but easy those and fit,
More slow than Hybla-drops, and far more sweet.
"I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate;
Though far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a banish'd man,[1] for your dear cause
Expos'd a prey to arbitrary laws!
Yet O that I alone could be undone,
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;
Egypt and Tyrus[2] intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.
My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charm'd into ease, is careless of his fame;
And, brib'd with petty sums of foreign gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old;[3]
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys;
And all his pow'r against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away;
But why should he his own and yours betray?
He, only he, can make the nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.
Take then my tears, (with that he wip'd his eyes,)
'Tis all the aid my present pow'r supplies:
No court-informer can these arms accuse;
These arms may sons against their fathers use:
And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign
May make no other Israelite complain."

Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail;
But common interest always will prevail;
And pity never ceases to be shown
To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd, that still believe their kings oppress,
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:

[1] Monmouth had been ordered out of England by the king in September, 1679, but returned without permission in November. Again ordered to leave, he refused to obey and was accordingly banished from court.
[2] Holland.
[3] Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, the ruling mistress of Charles's court.

Who now begins his progress to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a num'rous train;
From east to west his glories he displays:
And, like the sun, the promis'd land surveys.[1]
Fame runs before him as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar:
Each house receives him as a guardian god,
And consecrates the place of his abode.
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar,[2] his wealthy western friend.
This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seem'd but pomp, did other ends disguise:
Achitophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom, where it went,
The people's hearts; distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength. before they came to blows.
Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.
Religion, and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat and always please,
Are often urg'd; and good king David's life
Endanger'd by a brother and a wife.[3]
Thus in a pageant show a plot is made,
And peace itself is war in masquerade.
Oh foolish Israel! never warn'd by ill!
Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health imagine a disease;
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
What shall we think! Can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway?
Then they are left defenceless to the sword
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord;
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,

[1] Monmouth made such a progress through several counties of England on Shaftesbury's advice in 1680.

[2] Thomas Thynne of Langleat Hall (1648–1682), a commoner of great wealth, joined Monmouth's party and entertained him on the progress just mentioned.

[3] Charles's life was endangered by Shaftesbury's plot, which was motivated by his brother's being a Papist and his wife's being childless.

If kings unquestion'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming cov'nant was declar'd
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd.
If those who gave the sceptre could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity,
How then could Adam bind his future race?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
Add, that the pow'r for property allow'd
Is mischievously seated in the crowd;
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by might?
Nor is the people's judgment always true:
The most may err as grossly as the few;
And faultless kings run down, by common cry,
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
What standard is there in a fickle rout,
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?[1]
Nor only crowds, but Sanhedrins may be
Infected with this public lunacy,
And share the madness of rebellious times,
To murther monarchs for imagin'd crimes.
If they may give and take whene'er they please,
Not kings alone, (the Godhead's images,)
But government itself at length must fall
To nature's state, where all have right to all.
Yet grant our lords the people kings can make,
What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
That change they covet makes them suffer more.
All other errors but disturb a state,
But innovation is the blow of fate.
If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,

[1] The assumption in this rather obscure figure is that the stream, in flowing to the mark, is directed along a narrow channel and therefore runs the faster out. But even so, this does not illustrate the fickleness of the rout.

To patch the flaws, and buttress up the wall,
Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark;
For all beyond it is to touch our ark.[1]
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels who base ends pursue,
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
The tamp'ring world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse.

Now what relief can righteous David bring?
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
Friends he has few, so high the madness grows;
Who dare be such, must be the people's foes.
Yet some there were, ev'n in the worst of days;
Some let me name, and naming is to praise.

In this short file Barzillai first appears;[2]
Barzillai, crown'd with honour and with years.
Long since, the rising rebels he withstood
In regions waste, beyond the Jordan's flood:[3]
Unfortunately brave to buoy the state;
But sinking underneath his master's fate:
In exile with his godlike prince he mourn'd,
For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
The court he practis'd,[4] not the courtier's art:
Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,
The fighting warrior, and recording Muse.
His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
Now more than half a father's name is lost.[5]
His eldest hope, with every grace adorn'd,
By me (so Heav'n will have it) always mourn'd,
And always honour'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime

[1] See II Samuel, vi, 6, 7.

[2] James Butler, Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under Charles I and again under Charles II. He was a man of high character and a devoted follower of the Stuarts.

[3] the Irish Channel.

[4] a zeugma, combining the French meaning, "frequented," with the ordinary English.

[5] By this time Ormond had lost six of his eight sons, including the eldest, the Earl of Ossory, who died in 1680.

B' unequal fates, and Providence's crime:
Yet not before the goal of honour won,
All parts fulfill'd of subject and of son:
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
O narrow circle, but of pow'r divine,
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own:
Thy force, infus'd, the fainting Tyrians propp'd;
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopp'd.[1]
O ancient honour! O unconquer'd hand,
Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of thy name;
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
It looks as Heav'n our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
Now, free from earth, thy disencumber'd soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole:
From thence thy kindred legions may'st thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy King.
Here stop, my Muse, here cease thy painful flight;
No pinions can pursue immortal height:
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
And tell thy soul she should have fled before.
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heav'n, and see
If thou canst find on earth another *he:*
Another *he* would be too hard to find,
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadoc[2] the priest, whom, shunning pow'r and place,
His lowly mind advanc'd to David's grace.
With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,[3]
Of hospitable soul, and noble stem;
Him of the western dome,[4] whose weighty sense

[1] Ossory fought under the Prince of Orange in 1678 against the French.
[2] William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury (1617–1693).
[3] The Sagan is the second highest functionary in the Jewish Temple. Here, the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, the youngest son of the second Earl of Northampton.
[4] John Dolben, Dean of Westminster (the "western dome"). The Prophets' sons are the Westminster school boys.

Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.
The Prophets' sons, by such example led,
To learning and to loyalty were bred:
For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.
To these succeed the pillars of the laws;
Who best could plead, and best can judge a cause.
Next them a train of loyal peers ascend;
Sharp-judging Adriel,[1] the Muses' friend;
Himself a Muse—in Sanhedrin's debate
True to his Prince, but not a slave of state:
Whom David's love with honours did adorn,
That from his disobedient son were torn.[2]
Jotham[3] of piercing wit, and pregnant thought;
Endued by nature and by learning taught
To move assemblies, who but only tried
The worse a while, then chose the better side:
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too;
So much the weight of one brave man can do.
Hushai,[4] the friend of David in distress;
In public storms of manly stedfastness:
By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth
And join'd experience to his native truth.
His frugal care supplied the wanting throne;
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,
But hard the task to manage well the low;
For sovereign pow'r is too depress'd or high,
When kings are forc'd to sell, or crowds to buy.[5]
Indulge one labour more, my weary Muse,
For Amiel:[6] who can Amiel's praise refuse?

[1] John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, a patron of Dryden's (1648–1721).

[2] Charles conferred on Mulgrave some of the offices he had taken from Monmouth when the latter refused to quit England on his father's orders.

[3] George Savile, Marquis of Halifax (1633–1695), had at first advocated the Exclusion Bill but later spoke against it and by his eloquence helped to defeat it. He was called a trimmer and later wrote "The Character of a Trimmer."

[4] Laurence Hyde, Viscount (1680) and Earl (1682) of Rochester. He had been ambassador to Holland.

[5] When sovereign power is depressed, kings have to sell their prerogatives; when it is high, crowds have to buy royal favor.

[6] Edward Seymour, head of the ancient house of Somerset and Speaker of the House of Commons, 1673–9.

Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
In his own worth, and without title great:
The Sanhedrin long time as chief he rul'd,
Their reason guided, and their passion cool'd:
So dext'rous was he in the Crown's defence,
So form'd to speak a loyal nation's sense,
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend:
They, like th' unequal ruler of the day,[1]
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way;
While he withdrawn at their mad labour smiles,
And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.

These were the chief, a small but faithful band
Of worthies, in the breach who dar'd to stand,
And tempt th' united fury of the land.
With grief they view'd such powerful engines bent
To batter down the lawful government.
A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
In Sanhedrins to plume[2] the regal rights;
The true successor from the Court remov'd;
The plot, by hireling witnesses, improv'd.
These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
They show'd the King the danger of the wound;
That no concessions from the throne would please,
But lenitives fomented the disease;
That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
Was made the lure to draw the people down;
That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
Had turn'd the plot to ruin Church and State;
The council violent, the rabble worse;
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.

With all these loads of injuries oppress'd,
And long revolving in his careful breast
Th' event of things, at last his patience tir'd,

[1] Phæton, who tried to drive the horses of the sun and could not control them.
[2] pluck (feathers from a bird).

Thus from his royal throne, by Heav'n inspir'd,
The godlike David spoke; with awful fear
His train their Maker in their master hear.

"Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delay'd;
So willing to forgive th' offending age;
So much the father did the king assuage.
But now so far my clemency they slight,
Th' offenders question my forgiving right.
That one was made for many, they contend;
But 'tis to rule, for that's a monarch's end.
They call my tenderness of blood, my fear,
Though manly tempers can the longest bear.
Yet, since they will divert my native course,
'Tis time to show I am not good by force.
Those heap'd affronts that haughty subjects bring,
Are burdens for a camel, not a king.
Kings are the public pillars of the State,
Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight;
If my young Samson will pretend a call
To shake the column, let him share the fall;
But O that yet he would repent and live!
How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
With how few tears a pardon might be won
From nature, pleading for a darling son![1]
Poor pitied youth, by my paternal care
Rais'd up to all the height his frame could bear!
Had God ordain'd his fate for empire born,
He would have giv'n his soul another turn:
Gull'd with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
Is one that would by law supplant his prince;
The people's brave, the politician's tool;
Never was patriot yet, but was a fool.
Whence comes it that religion and the laws
Should more be Absalom's than David's cause?
His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
Was never thought endu'd with so much grace.
Good heav'ns, how faction can a patriot paint!
My rebel ever proves my people's saint.

[1] Lines 957–960 were inserted in the second edition.

Would *they* impose an heir upon the throne?
Let Sanhedrins be taught to give their own.
A king's at least a part of government,
And mine as requisite as their consent;
Without my leave a future king to choose,
Infers a right the present to depose.
True, they petition me t' approve their choice,
But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.
My pious subjects for my safety pray;
Which to secure, they take my pow'r away.
From plots and treasons Heav'n preserve my years,
But save me most from my petitioners.
Unsatiate as the barren womb or grave;[1]
God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
What then is left, but with a jealous eye
To guard the small remains of royalty?
The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
And the same law teach rebels to obey:
Votes shall no more establish'd pow'r control—
Such votes as make a part exceed the whole:
No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,
Nor crowds have pow'r to punish ere they prove;
For gods and godlike kings their care express,
Still to defend their servants in distress.
O that my pow'r to saving were confin'd!
Why am I forced, like Heav'n, against my mind,
To make examples of another kind?
Must I at length the sword of justice draw?
O curst effects of necessary law!
How ill my fear they by my mercy scan!
Beware the fury of a patient man.
Law they require, let Law then show her face;
They could not be content to look on Grace,
Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye
To tempt the terror of her front and die.[2]
By their own arts, 'tis righteously decreed,
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.

[1] See Proverbs, xxx, 15, 16.

[2] See Exodus, xxxiii, 20–23. Moses could not see the face of God and live, but he was permitted to see the back parts of God. So here Charles's enemies have hitherto seen only Grace, the hinder parts of Law; now they will dare look on the face of Law and will die.

Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
Till viper-like their mother-plot they tear;
And suck for nutriment that bloody gore,
Which was their principle of life before.
Their Belial with their Beelzebub will fight;
Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.
Nor doubt th' event; for factious crowds engage,
In their first onset, all their brutal rage.
Then let 'em take an unresisted course;
Retire and traverse, and delude their force:
But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
And rise upon 'em with redoubled might;
For lawful pow'r is still superior found;
When long driv'n back at length it stands the ground."

He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave consent;
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran:
Once more the godlike David was restor'd,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

(1681)

MacFlecknoe

OR A SATIRE UPON THE TRUE-BLUE PROTESTANT POET, T. S

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And when Fate summons, monarchs must obey;
This Flecknoe[1] found, who like Augustus young,
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;

[1] Richard Flecknoe died in 1678. He was an Irish Roman Catholic priest and a dull poet. Thomas Shadwell (1642?–1692), whom for the purposes of satire Dryden calls Mac (the son of) Flecknoe, was a wit and a dramatist of no mean ability and was at first a friend of Dryden's. Shadwell, however, was a Whig and Dryden a Tory, and the former attacked the anti-exclusionists in a comedy and Dryden in a poem, "The Medal of John Bayes," thus hitting at Dryden's poem, "The Medal," and recalling Buckingham's satire against Dryden as Bayes in "The Rehearsal." In reply to this attack Dryden published "MacFlecknoe" anonymously in 1682, though it may have been written as early as 1678.

In prose and verse was own'd without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute;
This aged prince now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate,
To settle the succession of the state,
And pond'ring, which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war, with wit,
Cried, "'Tis resolv'd (for Nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me,)
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity;
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense;
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day;
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch-oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign;
Heywood and Shirley[1] were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Ev'n I a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came
To teach the nations in thy greater name;
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,[2]
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge,
And big with hymn, commander of an host,

[1] Thomas Heywood and James Shirley were voluminous dramatists in the first half of the seventeenth century. They do not deserve this contemptuous reference.

[2] Flecknoe records that King John of Portugal conferred distinction upon him for his skill in music when Flecknoe was living in Lisbon.

The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets tost.[1]
Methinks I see the new Arion[2] sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharp'ned thumb, from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
Echoes from Pissing-alley, Shadwell call,
And Shadwell they resound from Aston-hall;
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast, that floats along.
Sometimes as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's[3] feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not even the feet of thy own 'Psyche's'[4] rhyme;
Though they in number, as in sense excel,
So just, so like tautology they fell
That pale with envy Singleton[5] forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius more."[6]
Here stopt the good old sire, and wept for joy,
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy;
All arguments (but most his plays) persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.
 Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd,)[7]
An ancient fabric rais'd t' inform the sight,
There stood of yore (and Barbican[8] it hight,)
A watch-tower once, but now (so fate ordains)
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys;

[1] The reference is to Shadwell's play, "Epsom Wells," and to the ancient practice of tossing rascals in a blanket.

[2] The Greek poet who so charmed the dolphins that they carried him to shore when he was forced to leap overboard.

[3] a well-known dancing master of that time.

[4] a rhymed opera by Shadwell.

[5] John Singleton, a contemporary musician. See Pepys's "Diary," under date November 20, 1660.

[6] Villerius, a leading character in Davenant's "Siege of Rhodes," engages in a long dialogue with Solyman, which was ridiculed in "The Rehearsal" as a combination of singing and fighting, of "lute and sword."

[7] The name given to London by the Romans in honour of Augustus Cæsar whose name was bestowed in flattery upon Charles II.

[8] Barbican was a street in Aldersgate.

Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep;
Near these a Nursery erects its head,[1]
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred,
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins[2] the gods defy.
Great Fletcher[3] never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear;
But gentle Simkin[4] just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanished minds:
Pure clinches[5] the suburbian muse affords,
And Panton[6] waging harmless war with words;
Here Flecknoe as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Decker[7] prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense,
To whom true dulness should some "Psyches" owe,
But worlds of "Misers" from his pen should flow:
"Humourists" and Hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families and tribes of Bruce.[8]
Now empress Fame had publish'd the renown
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
Rous'd by report of Fame, the nations meet
From near Bunhill and distant Watling-street.[9]
No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay;

[1] A theatre for the training of boys and girls for the stage, established under royal letters patent (1662), which prohibited "obscene, scandalous, or offensive passages," and restricted the performances to "what may consist with harmless and inoffensive delights and recreations" (*Christie*).

[2] Maximin, in Dryden's "Tyrannic Love," defies the gods.

[3] John Fletcher's tragedies and Ben Jonson's comedies were more popular on the Restoration stage than the plays of Shakspere.

[4] Said to be a cobbler in an interlude; hence a member of the gentle craft of shoemaking. The interlude has not been identified.

[5] puns.

[6] Said to have been a celebrated punster. "Nothing beside remains."

[7] Thomas Decker or Dekker (1670?–1641?), one of the later Elizabethan dramatists.

[8] "Psyche," "The Miser," and "The Humourists" were plays by Shadwell. Raymond is a character in "The Humourists" and Bruce in "The Virtuoso," another play by Shadwell.

[9] Bunhill and Watling Street were actually not far apart.

From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby,[1] there lay,
But loads of Shadwell almost chok'd the way.
Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepar'd,
And Herringman[2] was captain of the guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appear'd
High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
At his right hand our young Ascanius[3] sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dulness played around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dulness would maintain;
And in his father's right and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction[4] made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
"Love's Kingdom"[5] to his right he did convey,
At once his sceptre, and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practis'd young,
And from whose loins recorded[6] "Psyche" sprung.
His temples (last) with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, (if fame not lie,)
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus ('tis sung) by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honours of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,

[1] John Ogleby (1600–76), a voluminous translator and poetaster.
[2] Henry Herringman, a publisher who specialized in poetry and plays.
[3] Ascanius was the son and heir of Æneas; here, Shadwell.
[4] the act of anointing. [5] a play by Flecknoe. [6] sung.

Repelling from his breast the raging God,
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:
"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known
And greater than his father's be this throne;
Beyond 'Love's Kingdom' let him stretch his pen."
He paus'd, and all the people cry'd "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me,
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let 'Virtuosos' in five years be writ,
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.[1]
Let gentle George[2] in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling charm the pit,
And in their folly show the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness; and desire no foreign aid,
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thine own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and diff'ring but in name;
But let no alien Sedley[3] interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.
And when false flowers of rhet'ric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best, and top, and in each line
Sir Formal's[4] oratory will be thine.
Sir Formal though unsought attends thy quill,

[1] Shadwell boasted of his speed in writing; Dryden knew he was slow.
[2] Sir George Etherege (1635?–1691), author of Restoration comedies, for which Dryden had high admiration. The characters in the two following lines appear in his comedies.
[3] Sir Charles Sedley (1639?–1701) had written the Prologue for Shadwell's "Epsom Wells" (1672), and in his dedication of "A True Widow" to Sedley (1679) Shadwell thanked him for his assistance in writing the play.
[4] Sir Formal Trifle, "a florid coxcomb" in Shadwell's "The Virtuoso."

And doth thy northern dedications fill.[1]
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name;[2]
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood where Jonson has no part,
What share have we in nature or in art?
When did his wit on learning fix a brand?
Or rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's[3] vein
Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, "whip-stitch, kiss my arse,"
Promised a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Etherege dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfus'd as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play;[4]
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way to dulness 'tis inclin'd;
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.[5]
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness, thine's a tympany[6] of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin[7] of wit.
Like mine thy gentle numbers feebly creep,
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.

[1] Shadwell dedicated six of his plays to the Duke of Newcastle and his family.

[2] Shadwell so admired Jonson that his friends would flatter him by telling him his plays resembled Jonson's.

[3] a character in Shadwell's "Psyche."

[4] In Shadwell's dedication of "The Virtuoso," he says, "Four of the humours are entirely new."

[5] Lines 189–192 are an adaptation of lines from the Epilogue of Shadwell's "The Humourists":

> "A humour is the bias of the mind,
> By which with violence 'tis one way inclined;
> It makes our actions lean on one side still,
> And in all changes that way bends the will."

[6] an abnormal swelling; hence, bombast. [7] a small barrel.

With whate'er gall thou setst thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite;
In thy feloníous heart, though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen Iambics,[1] but mild Anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command,
Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
There thou mayst wings display, and altars raise,[2]
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways;
Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longville had a trap prepar'd
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.[3]
Sinking, he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part
With double portion of his father's art.[4]

(Publ. 1682)

[1] Iambics were the measure for Greek satire; hence, for satire generally.
[2] Write poems so that by typographical arrangement they resemble on the printed page altars, wings, etc.
[3] Such a trick was played on Sir Formal Trifle in Shadwell's "The Virtuoso," Act III, by Bruce and Longville.
[4] See II Kings, ii, 12–15.

To the Pious Memory of the Accomplish'd Young Lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew[1]

EXCELLENT IN THE TWO SISTER ARTS OF POESY AND PAINTING

AN ODE

I

THOU youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
 Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
 Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,
 Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'd with the heav'ns' majestic pace;
 Or, call'd to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since heav'n's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,
 In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
 While yet a young probationer,
 And candidate of heav'n.

II

If by traduction[2] came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find

[1] The title "Mrs." was applied at this time to both married and unmarried women. Anne Killigrew (1660–1685) was the daughter of the Reverend Henry Killigrew and maid-of-honor to the Duchess of York. She died of smallpox. Her poems were published in 1686, and to them Dryden's ode was prefixed.

[2] Transmission by generation to offspring, as against the direct creation of each soul by God.

A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father[1] was transfus'd into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was form'd, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.[2]
If so, then cease thy flight, O heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore;
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return,[3] to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

III

May we presume to say, that at thy birth
New joy was sprung in heav'n, as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.[4]
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth.
And then, if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees
On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,[5]
'Twas that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy holiday above.

[1] Her father had written a play, "The Conspiracy," in 1638, revised in 1653.

[2] The reference is to the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, according to which the noble soul inhabits the bodies of still nobler beings as it progresses in virtue, with the reverse for the base souls.

[3] Return to heaven, from which it came.

[4] A triangular conjunction of planets supposed to be favorable to mankind.

[5] As they were reputed to have done on the infant lips of Plato.

IV

O gracious God! how far have we
Profan'd thy heav'nly gift of poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love!
O wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubric and adult'rate age,
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own,)
T' increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t' excuse our second fall?
Let this thy Vestal, Heav'n, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoil'd,[1]
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefil'd;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child!

V

Art she had none, yet wanted none;
For Nature did that want supply:
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn
That it seem'd borrow'd, where 'twas only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred,
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test and ev'ry light, her Muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp[2] were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her Muse express'd)[3]
Was but a lambent flame which play'd about her breast:
Light as the vapours of a morning dream,

[1] Arethusa, pursued by Alpheus, was changed by Diana into a fountain, which, after flowing under earth and sea, reappeared unsullied in the isle of Ortygia.

[2] Epictetus (born c. 50 A.D.), who lived in a hut with no other furniture than a bed and a lamp, was a Stoic philosopher; but unless Dryden confused him with Diogenes, who with his lamp was always looking for an honest man, he does not seem to fit into this context.

[3] Did Dryden notice that he repeated this word in l. 86?

So cold herself, whilst she such warmth express'd,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

VI

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A Chamber of Dependences was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretence,
When arm'd, to justify th' offence,)
And the whole fief in right of Poetry she claim'd.
The country open lay without defence;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament;
And all the large demains which the dumb Sister sway'd;
All bow'd beneath her government;
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she went.
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which, as in mirrors, show'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear:
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome, or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken lie,
And, though defac'd, the wonder of the eye:
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,

Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

VII

The scene then chang'd: with bold erected look
Our martial King[1] the sight with reverence strook;
For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand call'd out the image of his heart:
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figur'd there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phœnix queen[2] was portray'd too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands;
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank the queen.
Thus nothing to her genius was denied,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had design'd, Heaven only knows;
To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose
That Fate alone its progress could oppose.

VIII

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
The well-proportion'd shape and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes:
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies.
Not wit nor piety could Fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel Destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;

[1] James II. [2] Mary of Este, crowned Queen of England in 1685.

But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda[1] died:
Heav'n, by the same disease, did both translate;
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

IX

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas[2]
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, generous youth, that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far
Among the Pleiads a new-kindl'd star,
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

X

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the Valley of Jehosophat[3]
The judging God shall close the book of Fate,
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky;
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,

[1] The matchless Orinda, Katharine Philips, died of smallpox in 1664. Her poems were published in 1667. Mrs. Killigrew wrote a poem to her memory.
[2] Henry Killigrew, a captain, later admiral in the navy.
[3] See Joel, iii, 2, 12.

For they are cover'd with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shalt go,
As harbinger of Heav'n, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learn'd below.

(1686)

Religio Laici

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight;
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to Nature's secret head;
And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that Universal He;
Whether some soul encompassing this ball
Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving all;[1]
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form, (the noble work of chance;)[2]
Or this great All was from eternity;
Not ev'n the Stagirite[3] himself could see,
And Epicurus[4] guess'd as well as he:
As blindly grop'd they for a future state;

[1] The philosopher Anaxagoras (fifth century, B.C.) held that the divine mind brought order out of chaos.

[2] The philosopher Democritus (fifth century, B.C.) taught that the world came into being through the fortuitous concourse of atoms.

[3] Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), born in Stagira, Macedonia.

[4] Epicurus (341–270 B.C.) accepted the atomic theory of Democritus, and was the founder of the hedonistic philosophy of Epicureanism.

As rashly judg'd of Providence and Fate:
But least of all could their endeavours find
What most concern'd the good of human kind;
For happiness was never to be found,
But vanish'd from 'em like enchanted ground.
One thought content the good to be enjoy'd;
This every little accident destroy'd:
The wiser madmen[1] did for Virtue toil,
A thorny, or at best a barren soil;
In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep,[2]
But found their line too short, the well too deep,
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus, anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a centre where to fix the soul;
In this wild maze their vain endeavours end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite Reason reach Infinity?
For what could fathom God were more than He. . . .
Shall I speak plain, and in a nation free
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think (according to my little skill,
To my own Mother Church submitting still)
That many have been sav'd, and many may,
Who never heard this question brought in play.
Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,[3]
Plods on to heaven, and ne'er is at a loss;
For the strait gate would be made straiter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few, by Nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page, and see
Which doctrine, this, or that, does best agree
With the whole tenour of the work divine,
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design;
Which exposition flows from genuine sense,
And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
When general, old, disinteress'd, and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page
Gives truth the reverend majesty of age;

[1] the Stoics. [2] the Epicureans. [3] in bulk, without regard to details.

Confirms its force, by biding every test;
For best authority's next rules[1] are best;
And still the nearer to the spring we go,
More limpid, more unsoil'd the waters flow.
Thus, first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so known:
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth, but probability.
Even Arius and Pelagius[2] durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale;
But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written therefore more commends
Authority, than what from voice descends:
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the sacred history,
Which, from the Universal Church receiv'd,
Is tried, and after, for its self believ'd.
 The partial Papists would infer from hence,
Their Church, in last resort, should judge the sense;
But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant they were
The handers down, can they from thence infer
A right t' interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own?
The Book's a common largess to mankind,
Not more for them than every man design'd;
The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known, is plain.
 In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance;
When want of learning kept the laymen low,

[1] Scott and Saintsbury suggest the reading, "authorities, next rules," but the reading of the text is that of the first three editions. The meaning, as suggested by the line following, is that the nearest rules of the best authorities are best.

[2] Arius (fourth century, A.D.) denied the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Son was coexistent with the Father. Pelagius (fifth century) proclaimed the freedom of the will and the doctrine of human perfectibility.

And none but priests were authoris'd to know;
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell,
And he a god who could but read or spell:
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail;
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail;
But still expounded what she sold or gave,
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content;[1]
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,
That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began t' inquire
If they the book, or that did them inspire;
And, making narrower search, they found, though late,
That what they thought the priest's was their estate,
Taught by the will produc'd, (the written word,)
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then every man who saw the title fair,
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share;
Consulted soberly his private good,
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.
'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence)
This good had full as bad a consequence:
The book thus put in every vulgar hand,
Which each presum'd he best could understand,
The common rule was made the common prey,
And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:
The spirit gave the doctoral degree;
And every member of a Company
Was of his trade and of the Bible free.
Plain truths enough for needful use they found,
But men would still be itching to expound:
Each was ambitious of th' obscurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from Grace.

[1] without question.

Study and pains were now no more their care;
Texts were explain'd by fasting and by prayer:
This was the fruit the private spirit brought,
Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,
About the sacred viands buzz and swarm,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.
A thousand daily sects rise up and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply:
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd will
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
The danger's much the same; on several shelves
If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.
What then remains, but, waving each extreme,
The tides of ignorance and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;
Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know:
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of heav'n, than all the Church before;
Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will;)
'Tis some relief that points not clearly known
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to learn;
But common quiet is mankind's concern.
Thus have I made my own opinions clear;
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose,

As fittest for discourse and nearest prose;
For, while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's[1] or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.

(1682)

To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve

ON HIS COMEDY CALL'D "THE DOUBLE DEALER"[2]

WELL then, the promis'd hour is come at last:
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires; and as they fought they writ,
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race, before the flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus,[3] he the stubborn soil manur'd,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd;
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boist'rous English wit with art endued.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were with want of genius curst;
The second temple was not like the first;[4]
Till you, the best Vitruvius,[5] come at length,
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base;
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space:
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise;
He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please;
Yet, doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorn'd their age;

[1] Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins translated the Psalms into very bad verse, in about 1549.

[2] William Congreve (1670–1729) wrote his "Double Dealer" in 1693.

[3] The mythical first king of Rome. He learned agriculture from Saturn and taught it to his subjects.

[4] The temple built by Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra, v, vi) was not equal to that built by Solomon (Haggai, ii, 1–3).

[5] A celebrated Roman writer on architecture in the first century B.C.

One for the study, t'other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'ermatch'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see,
Etherege his courtship,[1] Southern's purity,
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherly.
All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd,
Nor are your foil'd contemporaries griev'd.
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless consul made against the law;
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome,
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.[2]
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame,
And scholar to the youth he taught became.[3]
O that your brows my laurel had sustain'd;
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus, when the State one Edward did depose,
A greater Edward in his room arose.[4]
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.[5]
But let 'em not mistake my patron's part,
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophesy: Thou shalt be seen
(Though with some short parenthesis between)
High on the throne of wit; and, seated there,
Not mine—that's little—but thy laurel wear.
Thy first attempt an early promise made;[6]

[1] courtliness.

[2] Scipio gained a victory over the Carthaginians in 202 B.C. after Fabius had jealously opposed his project of an active campaign, and he was made consul before the legal age. The significance of the allusion is evidently that Fabius would not have been jealous if he could have seen in Scipio the charm of Congreve.

[3] Dryden has reversed the relations of Giulio Romano (1492–1546), the pupil, and Raphael (1483–1520), the master.

[4] The weak Edward II was deposed in 1327 and was succeeded by the vigorous Edward III.

[5] Thomas Shadwell, who succeeded Dryden as Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal, died in 1692 and was succeeded as Historiographer Royal by Thomas Rymer.

[6] Congreve's first attempt was "The Old Bachelor," in January, 1693.

That early promise this[1] has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought;
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.
Maintain your post: that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage;
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expense,
I live a rent-charge on His providence:
But you, whom ev'ry Muse and Grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and oh defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you;
And take for tribute what these lines express:
You merit more, nor could my love do less.

(1693)

Alexander's Feast

Or, The Power of Music

an ode in honour of st. cecilia's day[2]

I

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won,
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate

[1] "The Double Dealer," acted in November, 1693.

[2] In 1680 a Musical Society was formed for the annual celebration of St. Cecilia's Day on November 22. In 1687 Dryden composed his "Song for St. Cecilia's Day" for the occasion, and in 1697 the much finer "Alexander's Feast." St. Cecilia was a Roman virgin of rank who flourished during the reign of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and became a martyr for the Christian faith. She was elected patron of musicians and was believed to have invented the organ.—*Scott.*

On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were plac'd around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound.
(So should desert in arms be crown'd:)
The lovely Thais[1] by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flow'r of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II

Timotheus[2] plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heav'nly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove;
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the pow'r of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form bely'd the god:
Sublime on radiant spires[3] he rode,
When he to fair Olympia[4] press'd:
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then, round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'reign of the world.
The list'ning crowd admire the lofty sound,

[1] the mistress of Alexander.
[2] Not the famous musician who died the year before Alexander was born, but a musician of less note in Alexander's court. Probably Dryden did not discriminate between them.
[3] aloft on radiant coils. [4] properly Olympias, the mother of Alexander.

A present deity, they shout around;
A present deity the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung;
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets; beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure;
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV

Sooth'd with the sound the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;

And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he heav'n and earth defy'd,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.[1]
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate
And weltring in his blood:
Deserted at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed:
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.[2]

With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

V

The mighty master smil'd to see
That love was in the next degree:
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move;
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian[3] measures,

[1] Timotheus's hand, Alexander's pride.

[2] After the defeat of Darius by Alexander, Bessus, one of Darius's satraps, seized his chief with the intention of carrying him off to his satrapy; but, being pursued by Alexander, he murdered Darius and made his escape. Later he was captured and executed.

[3] One of the three measures of ancient music, the Dorian and the Phrygian being the other two.

Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour but an empty bubble.
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying,
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying.
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.

The many rend the skies, with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head,
As awak'd from the dead
And amaz'd he stares around.
Revenge revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,

How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain.
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods!
The princes applaud, with a furious joy;
And the king seiz'd a flambeau, with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

CHORUS

And the king seiz'd a flambeau, with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

VII

Thus long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;[1]
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown

[1] the organ.

He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.[1]

GRAND CHORUS

At last, divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

(1697)

Cf. "Song for St. Cecilia's Day," ll. 51–54:

> "But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
> When to her organ vocal breath was given,
> An angel heard, and straight appeared,
> Mistaking earth for heaven."

Joseph Addison

1672—1719

JOSEPH ADDISON, the son of the rector of Milston, in Wiltshire, later Dean of Lichfield, was born in his father's parish on May 1, 1672. After a preliminary education at the Charter House in London, he was admitted in 1687 to Queen's College, Oxford. Two years later he was made a foundation scholar, or "demy," of Magdalen College, and there he proceeded to his Master's degree in 1693. He was elected to a fellowship in 1699 and held it until 1711. In 1693 he wrote in verse his "Account of the Greatest English Poets," remarkable as much for its sins of omission as for those of commission, since he made no mention of Shakspere and characterized Spenser as too barbarous for the present age. Lord Halifax, who saw in Addison a bright young man with possibilities as a Whig henchman, got him a pension of £300 a year in 1699 and sent him abroad to enlarge his knowledge and his experience of men and countries. He spent four years traveling in France, Italy, and Switzerland, and in 1701 wrote a dutiful letter in verse to his patron. The death of Anne in 1702 deprived him of his pension and his prospects, so that when he returned to England in 1703, his fortunes were at their worst. Lord Halifax and the publisher Tonson, however, secured him membership in the celebrated Kit-Kat Club, made up of leading Whigs. Through the good offices of Halifax, he was asked to write a poem celebrating Marlborough's triumph in the battle of Blenheim. "The Campaign" was the result; it succeeded in its political purpose and, in the judgment of Addison's contemporaries, in its poetic form and content as well. It was, at any rate, the making of his fortunes. In 1706 he was appointed Under-Secretary of State, a position he held until the close of 1708. The following year he was sent to Ireland as secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Wharton. While there, he began writing for *The Tatler*, which his old schoolfellow Richard Steele had founded in April, 1709. He and Steele were co-editors of *The Spectator* from March 1, 1711, to December 6, 1712. In 1713, he won a great success with his "Cato," for its political implications rather than for its artistic merits. In this year, he published *The Guardian*, and the next year he revived *The Spectator*, from June 18 to December 20. In 1716, he married Charlotte, Countess of Warwick; Pope spitefully would have us

believe that discord came with this noble wife. In 1717, he attained his highest office, that of Secretary of State, which position he resigned the following year, to retire on a pension of £1500. His last days were darkened by his rupture with Steele on political issues. He died on June 17, 1719, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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An Account of the Greatest English Poets

LONG had our dull fore-fathers slept supine,
Nor felt the raptures of the tuneful Nine;
Till Chaucer[1] first, a merry bard, arose,
And many a story told in rhyme and prose.
But age has rusted what the poet writ,
Worn out his language, and obscur'd his wit:
In vain he jests in his unpolish'd strain,
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.
Old Spenser[2] next, warm'd with poetic rage,
In ancient tales amus'd a barb'rous age;
An age that yet uncultivate and rude,
Where'er the poet's fancy led, pursu'd
Through pathless fields, and unfrequented floods,
To dens of dragons, and enchanted woods.

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400).
[2] Edmund Spenser (1552–1599).

But now the mystic tale, that pleas'd of yore,
Can charm an understanding age no more;
The long-spun allegories fulsome grow,
While the dull moral lies too plain below.
We view well-pleas'd at distance all the sights
Of arms and palfreys, battles, fields, and fights,
And damsels in distress, and courteous knights.
But when we look too near, the shades decay,
And all the pleasing landscape fades away.
 Great Cowley[1] then (a mighty genius) wrote,
O'er-run with wit, and lavish of his thought:
His turns too closely on the reader press;
He more had pleas'd us, had he pleas'd us less.
One glittering thought no sooner strikes our eyes
With silent wonder, but new wonders rise.
As in the milky-way a shining white
O'er-flows the heav'ns with one continu'd light;
That not a single star can show his rays,
Whilst jointly all promote the common blaze.
Pardon, great poet, that I dare to name
Th' unnumber'd beauties of thy verse with blame;
Thy fault is only wit in its excess,
But wit like thine in any shape will please.
What Muse but thine can equal hints inspire,
And fit the deep-mouth'd Pindar to thy lyre:
Pindar, whom others in a labour'd strain,
And forc'd expression, imitate in vain?
Well-pleas'd in thee he soars with new delight,
And plays in more unbounded verse, and takes a nobler flight.
 Blest man! whose spotless life and charming lays
Employ'd the tuneful prelate in thy praise:
Blest man! who now shalt be forever known,
In Sprat's[2] successful labours and thy own.
 But Milton next, with high and haughty stalks,
Unfetter'd in majestic numbers walks;
No vulgar hero can his Muse engage;
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallow'd rage.

[1] Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), author of "Pindarique Odes." Cf. Pope's "Epistle to Augustus," ll. 75–8.

[2] Thomas Sprat (1635–1713), Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, eulogist of Cowley.

See! see, he upward springs, and tow'ring high
Spurns the dull province of mortality,
Shakes heav'n's eternal throne with dire alarms,
And sets th' Almighty Thunderer in arms.
Whate'er his pen describes I more than see,
Whilst ev'ry verse, array'd in majesty,
Bold, and sublime, my whole attention draws,
And seems above the critic's nicer laws.
How are you struck with terror and delight
When angel with arch-angel copes in fight!
When great Messiah's outspread banner shines,
How does the chariot rattle in his lines!
What sounds of brazen wheels, what thunder, scare,
And stun the reader with the din of war!
With fear my spirits and my blood retire,
To see the seraphs sunk in clouds of fire;
But when, with eager steps, from hence I rise,
And view the first gay scenes of Paradise;
What tongue, what words of rapture can express
A vision so profuse of pleasantness.
Oh had the poet ne'er profan'd his pen,
To varnish o'er the guilt of faithless men;
His other works might have deserv'd applause!
But now the language can't support the cause;
While the clean current, though serene and bright,
Betrays a bottom odious to the sight.
But now, my Muse a softer strain rehearse,
Turn ev'ry line with art, and smooth thy verse;
The courtly Waller[1] next commands thy lays:
Muse tune thy verse, with art, to Waller's praise.
While tender airs and lovely dames inspire
Soft melting thoughts, and propagate desire;
So long shall Waller's strains our passion move,
And Sacharissa's beauties kindle love.
Thy verse, harmonious bard, and flatt'ring song
Can make the vanquish'd great, the coward strong,
Thy verse can show ev'n Cromwell's innocence,[2]

[1] Edmund Waller (1606–1687), a lyric poet who celebrated the beauty and cruelty of Sacharissa, who was Lady Dorothy Sidney, the daughter of the Earl of Leicester.

[2] The reference is to Waller's poem, "Upon the Late Storm and of the Death of His Highness Ensuing in the Same."

And compliment the storms that bore him hence.
Oh had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
But seen great Nassau[1] on the British throne!
How had his triumphs glitter'd in thy page,
And warm'd thee to a more exalted rage!
What scenes of death and horror had we view'd,
And how had Boyne's[2] wide current reek'd in blood!
Or if Maria's[3] charms thou wouldst rehearse,
In smoother numbers and a softer verse;
Thy pen had well describ'd her graceful air,
And Gloriana would have seem'd more fair.
Nor must Roscommon[4] pass neglected by,
That makes ev'n rules a noble poetry:
Rules whose deep sense and heav'nly numbers show
The best of critics, and of poets too.
Nor, Denham,[5] must we e'er forget thy strains,
While Cooper's Hill commands the neighb'ring plains.
But see where artful Dryden next appears,
Grown old in rime, but charming ev'n in years.
Great Dryden next, whose tuneful Muse affords
The sweetest numbers, and the fittest words.
Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs
She forms her voice, she moves our smiles or tears.
If satire or heroic strains she writes,
Her hero pleases, and her satire bites.
From her no harsh unartful numbers fall,
She wears all dresses, and she charms in all.
How might we fear our English poetry,
That long has flourish'd, should decay with thee;
Did not the Muse's other hope appear,
Harmonious Congreve,[6] and forbid our fear:
Congreve! whose fancy's unexhausted store
Has given already much, and promis'd more.

[1] William III.

[2] The battle of the Boyne, July 1, 1690, when William III defeated James II.

[3] Mary, Queen of England, along with William III.

[4] Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (1633?–1685), who translated Horace's "Art of Poetry" and wrote an "Essay on Translated Verse."

[5] Sir John Denham (1615–1669), the author of "Cooper's Hill," a poem written in the heroic couplet, one of the first of its kind in this verse.

[6] William Congreve (1670–1729), the most brilliant of the Restoration dramatists.

Congreve shall still preserve thy fame alive,
And Dryden's Muse shall in his friend survive.

(1694)

A Letter from Italy[1]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES LORD HALIFAX[2]
IN THE YEAR MDCCI

Salve magna parens frugum Saturnia tellus,
Magna virum! tibi res antiquæ laudis et artis
Aggredior, sanctos ausus recludere fontes.—VIRG. GEOR. II.ii[3]

WHILE you, my Lord, the rural shades admire,
And from Britannia's public posts retire,[4]
Nor longer, her ungrateful sons to please,
For their advantage sacrifice your ease;
Me into foreign realms my fate conveys,
Through nations fruitful of immortal lays,
Where the soft season and inviting clime
Conspire to trouble your repose with rime.
 For whereso'er I turn my ravish'd eyes,
Gay gilded scenes and shining prospects rise,
Poetic fields encompass me around,
And still I seem to tread on Classic ground;
For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung,
That not a mountain rears its head unsung,
Renown'd in verse each shady thicket grows,
And ev'ry stream in heavenly numbers flows.
 How am I pleas'd to search the hills and woods
For rising springs and celebrated floods!
To view the Nar,[5] tumultuous in his course,
And trace the smooth Clitumnus[6] to his source,

[1] The "Letter from Italy" was composed while Addison was crossing the Alps in 1701.
[2] Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax (1661–1715), a great statesman and financier, and a patron of Addison.
[3] "Hail Saturnian land, great mother of harvests and of men! I enter upon subjects of ancient glory and art, daring to disclose the sacred springs."—Reed's translation.
[4] Halifax had been impeached by the House of Commons in 1701
[5] the Nera, a tributary of the Tiber. [6] another tributary of the Tiber.

To see the Mincio[1] draw his watry store
Through the long windings of a fruitful shore,
And hoary Albula's infected tide[2]
O'er the warm bed of smoking sulphur glide.
Fir'd with a thousand raptures I survey
Eridanus[3] through flowery meadows stray,
The king of floods! that rolling o'er the plains
The towering Alps of half their moisture drains,
And proudly swoln with a whole winter's snows,
Distributes wealth and plenty where he flows.
Sometimes, misguided by the tuneful throng,
I look for streams immortaliz'd in song,
That lost in silence and oblivion lie,
(Dumb are their fountains and their channels dry)
Yet run forever by the Muse's skill,
And in the smooth description murmur still.
Sometimes to gentle Tiber I retire,
And the fam'd river's empty shores admire,
That destitute of strength derives its course
From thrifty urns and an unfruitful source;
Yet sung so often in poetic lays,
With scorn the Danube and the Nile surveys;
So high the deathless Muse exalts her theme!
Such was the Boyne,[4] a poor inglorious stream,
That in Hibernian vales obscurely stray'd,
And unobserv'd in wild Meanders play'd;
Till by your lines and Nassau's sword renown'd,
Its rising billows through the world resound,
Where'er the hero's godlike acts can pierce,
Or where the fame of an immortal verse.
Oh could the Muse my ravish'd breast inspire
With warmth like yours, and raise an equal fire,
Unnumber'd beauties in my verse should shine,
And Virgil's Italy should yield to mine!
See how the golden groves around me smile,
That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle,

[1] a tributary of the Po.

[2] "In our way to Tivoli, I saw the rivulet of Salforata, formerly called Albula, and smelt the stench that arises from its waters some time before I saw them."—Quoted by Reed from Addison's "Remarks, Towns near Rome."

[3] the river Po. [4] See "Account of Greatest English Poets," l. 103; n.

Or when transplanted and preserv'd with care,
Curse the cold clime, and starve in northern air.
Here kindly warmth their mounting juice ferments
To nobler tastes, and more exalted scents:
Ev'n the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,
And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume.
Bear me, some god, to Baia's gentle seats,[1]
Or cover me in Umbria's green retreats;
Where western gales eternally reside,
And all the seasons lavish all their pride:
Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers together rise,
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.
 Immortal glories in my mind revive,
And in my soul a thousand passions strive,
When Rome's exalted beauties I descry
Magnificent in piles of ruin lie.
An amphitheatre's amazing height
Here fills my eye with terror and delight,
That on its public shows unpeopled Rome,
And held uncrowded nations in its womb:
Here pillars rough with sculpture pierce the skies:
And here the proud triumphal arches rise,
Where the old Romans deathless acts display'd,
Their base degenerate progeny upbraid:
Whole rivers here forsake the fields below,
And wond'ring at their height through airy channels flow...

(1701)

[1] a resort on the Bay of Naples.

John Pomfret

1667–1702

JOHN POMFRET was born in his father's vicarage, at Luton, Bedfordshire, in 1667. He obtained his early education at the Bedford Grammar School; then he proceeded to Queen's College, Cambridge, from which he received his B.A. in 1684 and his M.A. in 1688. On leaving the university he took orders, and through the influence of friends he was given the rectory of Maulden in 1695, and of Milbrook in 1702, both in Bedfordshire. He had already tried his hand at verse as early as 1694, when he wrote an elegy on the death of Queen Mary. In 1700 he brought out the only poem by which he is known today, and which in his own time won him great popularity, "The Choice: a Poem by a Person of Quality." He wrote other poems at this time, a tame one with the lurid title of "Cruelty and Lust"; another with the lugubrious title, "Prospect of Death, an Ode"; and a third called, somewhat paradoxically, "Reason, a Poem." In 1702 he brought out a second edition of his poems as "Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions by the author of 'The Choice.'" Dr. Johnson paid Pomfret the compliment of adding his name to those the booksellers had submitted to him for his editing and for his Lives. Pomfret failed to secure preferment through the Bishop of London because the good bishop objected to the apparent reflection on the holy estate of matrimony in Pomfret's parenthetical remark, "(for I'd have no wife)" in "The Choice," though in 1692 he had married Elizabeth Wingate, of Luton. Pomfret died in 1702 and was buried at Maulden.

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The Choice

If Heav'n the grateful liberty would give,
That I might choose my method how to live;
And all those hours propitious fate should lend,
In blissful ease and satisfaction spend;
Near some fair town I'd have a private seat,
Built uniform, not little, nor too great;
Better, if on a rising ground it stood;
On this side fields, on that a neighb'ring wood.
It should within no other things contain,
But what are useful, necessary, plain:
Methinks 't is nauseous, and I'd ne'er endure
The needless pomp of gaudy furniture.
A little garden, grateful to the eye;
And a cool rivulet run murm'ring by:
On whose delicious banks a stately row
Of shady limes, or sycamores, should grow.
At th' end of which a silent study plac'd,
Should be with all the noblest authors grac'd:
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines
Immortal wit, and solid learning, shines;
Sharp Juvenal, and am'rous Ovid too,
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew:
He that with judgment reads his charming lines,
In which strong art with stronger nature joins,
Must grant his fancy does the best excel;
His thoughts so tender, and express'd so well:
With all those moderns, men of steady sense,
Esteem'd for learning and for eloquence.
In some of these, as fancy should advise,
I'd always take my morning exercise:
For sure no minutes bring us more content,
Than those in pleasing, useful studies spent.
 I'd have a clear and competent estate,
That I might live genteelly, but not great:
As much as I could moderately spend;
A little more, sometimes t' oblige a friend.
Nor should the sons of poverty repine
Too much at fortune, they should taste of mine;
And all that objects of true pity were,

Should be reliev'd with what my wants could spare:
For that our Maker has too largely giv'n,
Should be return'd in gratitude to Heav'n.
A frugal plenty should my table spread;
With healthy, not luxurious, dishes spread:
Enough to satisfy, and something more,
To feed the stranger, and the neighb'ring poor.
Strong meat indulges vice, and pamp'ring food
Creates diseases, and inflames the blood.
But what's sufficient to make nature strong,
And the bright lamp of life continue long,
I'd freely take; and, as I did possess,
The bounteous Author of my plenty bless.
I'd have a little vault, but always stor'd
With the best wines each vintage could afford.
Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse:
By making all our spirits debonair,
Throws off the lees, the sediment of care.
But as the greatest blessing Heaven lends
May be debauch'd, and serve ignoble ends;
So, but too oft, the grape's refreshing juice
Does many mischievous effects produce.
My house should no such rude disorders know,
As from high drinking consequently flow;
Nor would I use what was so kindly giv'n,
To the dishonour of indulgent Heav'n.
If any neighbour came, he should be free,
Us'd with respect, and not uneasy be,
In my retreat, or to himself or me.
What freedom, prudence, and right reason give,
All men may, with impunity, receive:
But the least swerving from their rule's too much;
For what's forbidden us, 't is death to touch.
That life may be more comfortable yet,
And all my joys refin'd, sincere, and great;
I'd choose two friends, whose company would be
A great advance to my felicity:
Well-born, of humours suited to my own,
Discreet, and men as well as books have known;
Brave, generous, witty, and exactly free

From loose behaviour, or formality:
Airy and prudent; merry, but not light;
Quick in discerning, and in judging right:
Secret they should be, faithful to their trust;
In reas'ning cool, strong, temperate, and just:
Obliging, open, without huffing, brave;
Brisk in gay talking, and in sober, grave:
Close in dispute, but not tenacious; tried
By solid reason, and let that decide:
Not prone to lust, revenge, or envious hate;
Nor busy meddlers with intrigues of state:
Strangers to slander, and sworn foes to spite;
Not quarrelsome, but stout enough to fight;
Loyal, and pious, friends to Cæsar;[1] true,
As dying martyrs, to their Maker too.
In their society I could not miss
A permanent, sincere, substantial bliss.
 Would bounteous Heav'n once more indulge, I'd choose
(For who would so much satisfaction lose,
As witty nymphs, in conversation, give)
Near some obliging modest fair to live:
For there's that sweetness in a female mind,
Which in a man's we cannot hope to find;
That, by a secret, but a pow'rful art,
Winds up the spring of life, and does impart
Fresh vital heat to the transported heart.
 I'd have her reason all her passions sway:
Easy in company, in private gay:
Coy to a fop, to the deserving free;
Still constant to herself, and just to me.
A soul she should have for great actions fit;
Prudence and wisdom to direct her wit:
Courage to look bold danger in the face;
No fear, but only to be proud, or base;
Quick to advise, by an emergence prest,
To give good counsel, or to take the best.
I'd have th' expressions of her thoughts be such,
She might not seem reserv'd, nor talk too much:
That shows a want of judgment, and of sense;
More than enough is but impertinence.

[1] loyal to the king.

Her conduct regular, her mirth refin'd;
Civil to strangers, to her neighbours kind:
Averse to vanity, revenge, and pride;
In all the methods of deceit untried:
So faithful to her friend, and good to all,
No censure might upon her actions fall:
Then would e'en envy be compell'd to say,
She goes the least of womankind astray.
To this fair creature I'd sometimes retire;
Her conversation would new joys inspire;
Give life an edge so keen, no surly care
Would venture to assault my soul, or dare,
Near my retreat, to hide one secret snare.
But so divine, so noble a repast
I'd seldom, and with moderation, taste:
For highest cordials all their virtue lose,
By a too frequent and too bold a use;
And what would cheer the spirits in distress,
Ruins our health, when taken to excess.
I'd be concern'd in no litigious jar;
Belov'd by all, not vainly popular.
Whate'er assistance I had pow'r to bring,
T' oblige my company, or to serve my king,
Whene'er they call, I'd readily afford
My tongue, my pen, my counsel, or my sword.
Law-suits I'd shun, with as much studious care,
As I would dens where hungry lions are;
And rather put up injuries, than be
A plague to him, who'd be a plague to me.
I value quiet at a price too great,
To give for my revenge so dear a rate:
For what do we by all our bustle gain,
But counterfeit delight for real pain?
If Heav'n a date of many years would give,
Thus I'd in pleasure, ease, and plenty live.
And as I near approach'd the verge of life,
Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)
Should take upon him all my worldly care,
Whilst I did for a better state prepare.
Then I'd not be with any trouble vex'd,
Nor have the evening of my days perplex'd;

But by a silent and a peaceful death,
Without a sigh, resign my aged breath.
And when committed to the dust, I'd have
Few tears, but friendly, dropt into my grave.
Then would my exit so propitious be,
All men would wish to live and die like me.

(1700)

Daniel Defoe

1660–1731

DANIEL DEFOE was born possibly on September 30, 1660, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London. He was the son of James Foe, a butcher (the family name was changed by Daniel in his middle life to "Defoe"). In 1674, he was sent by his Presbyterian father to a dissenting school for boys at Newington Green, kept by the Rev. Charles Morton, an excellent scholar, who later became vice-president of Harvard College. After attending the school for four or five years, Defoe wisely decided he was not fitted for the ministry, for which his godly parents had designed him. So he went into business, becoming a merchant in Cornhill, and married into a well-to-do family. His business ventures included several lines—hosiery, wines, and liquors—all on a rather large scale, if we may judge from the extent of his failure some years later, when he found he owed about £17,000. As a good Protestant, Defoe joined the Army of Monmouth in 1685, but escaped the natural consequences in some mysterious manner characteristic of him. After his business failure in 1692, he was made accountant to the commissioners of the glass duty, a position which he held until the duty on glass was abolished. Meantime, he established a brick and tile works near Tilbury, in Essex, but this enterprise was doomed to failure by his imprisonment in 1703. In January, 1697, Defoe wrote the surprisingly modern "Essay on Projects," and continued with tracts on current political questions. In 1701, he published his best-known poem, "The True-Born Englishman," in answer to the charge that King William was a foreigner because he was a Dutchman. The next year, armed with that most dangerous of all political weapons, irony, he wrote his "Shortest Way with Dissenters," which was misunderstood by Dissenters and high churchmen alike. In 1703 came his indictment and a sentence to pay a fine of 200 marks, to serve a jail term during the Queen's pleasure, to stand three times in the pillory, and to furnish security for seven years' good behavior. But his appearance in the pillory turned into an ovation and an occasion for his "Hymn to the Pillory." He was released from prison on November 4. And Robert Harley, later Earl of Oxford, recognizing in him a valuable political ally as a writer, proceeded to make use of him. Defoe established *The Review*, which ran from February 19, 1704, to June 11, 1713, as an organ in Harley's service.

In his "True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal" (1706) Defoe gave the first demonstration of his faculty for realistic narrative. Most of the time from 1706 to 1710, he was in Scotland in the service of Harley as a government agent and spy, watching suspected Scotch Jacobites, supporting the union of England and Scotland, and seeking to improve trade between the two countries. In 1709, he wrote the dull "History of the Union of Great Britain" to help on the cause. An ironical anti-Jacobite tract, "Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover," got him into trouble (which he could have avoided safely if he had not cast aspersions on Chief Justice Parker), and he was sent to jail for a few days in May, 1713. As soon as he was released, he established *The Mercator*, which ran for fourteen months, until July 20, 1714. An article of his in Hurt's *Flying Post*, reflecting on the Earl of Anglesey, led to his arrest on the charge of criminal libel. He was committed for trial, but was soon liberated. In October, 1714, he wrote his "Appeal to Honour and Justice" (published February, 1715), pleading that he was near death, and calling for sympathy in his forlorn state. On his recovery, he wrote a treatise on the career of Charles XII, of Sweden, and many pamphlets in favor of the new Hanoverians. He secured employment as a government spy on several papers, including Mist's *Weekly Journal*, in order to suppress questionable political articles and to keep the government posted on the anti-Hanoverians. When he was fifty-nine years old, he brought out "Robinson Crusoe," on April 25, 1719; its success was immediate and led to a rapid outpouring of other works of semi-fiction. In 1720 appeared "The Memoirs of a Cavalier" and "The Life, Adventures, and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton." In 1722, he brought out "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders" and "A Journal of the Plague Year," and in 1724, "Roxana." From 1725 to 1731, many of his books and pamphlets appeared, including "The Complete English Tradesman," "The Political History of the Devil," and "The Complete English Gentleman." Defoe died on April 24, 1731, in Moorfields, near the place of his birth, and he was buried in Bunhill Fields cemetery.

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Novels and Miscellaneous Works, with Prefaces and Notes. 1893–1906.

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The True-Born Englishman[1]

PART I

THE Romans first with Julius Cæsar came,
Including all the nations of that name,
Gauls, Greeks, and Lombards; and by computation,
Auxiliaries or slaves of ev'ry nation.
With Hengist, Saxons; Danes with Sueno came,
In search of plunder, not in search of fame.
Scots, Picts, and Irish from the Hibernian shore:
And conqu'ring William brought the Normans o'er.
All these their barb'rous offspring left behind,
The dregs of armies, they of all mankind;
Blended with Britons who before were here,
Of whom the Welsh ha' blest the character.
From this amphibious, ill-born mob began,
That vain ill-natur'd thing, an Englishman.
The customs, sirnames, languages, and manners,
Of all these nations, are their own explainers:
Whose relics are so lasting and so strong,
They ha' left a shibboleth upon our tongue;
By which with easy search you may distinguish
Your Roman-Saxon-Danish-Norman-English.
The great invading Norman let us know
What conquerors in after-times might do.
To ev'ry musqueteer he brought to town,
He gave the lands which never were his own.
When first the English crown he did obtain,
He did not send his Dutchmen home again.
No re-assumptions in his reign were known,

[1] The poem was a reply to a poem by John Tutchin, who had attacked William because he was a foreigner. As such, it was a successful piece of journalism.

Davenant might there ha' let his book alone.[1]
No parliament his army could disband;
He rais'd no money, for he paid in land.
He gave his legions their eternal station,
And made them all freeholders of the nation.
He canton'd out the country to his men,
And ev'ry soldier was a denizen.
The rascals thus enrich'd, he call'd them lords,
To please their upstart pride with new-made words;
And Doomsday Book his tyranny records.
 And here begins the ancient pedigree
That so exalts our poor nobility:
'T is that from some French trooper they derive,
Who with the Norman bastard did arrive:
The trophies of the families appear;
Some show the sword, the bow, and some the spear,
Which their great ancestor, forsooth, did wear.
These in the herald's register remain,
Their noble mean extraction to explain,
Yet who the hero was, no man can tell,
Whether a drummer or a colonel:
The silent record blushes to reveal
Their undescended dark original.
 But grant the best. How came the change to pass:
A true-born Englishman of Norman race?
A Turkish horse can show more history,
To prove his well-descended family.
Conquest, as by the moderns 't is exprest,
May give a title to the lands possest;
But that the longest sword should be so civil,
To make a Frenchman English, that's the devil.
 These are the heroes that despise the Dutch,
And rail at new-come foreigners so much;
Forgetting that themselves are all deriv'd
From the most scoundrel race that ever liv'd;
A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones,
Who ransack'd kingdoms, and dispeopl'd towns;

[1] Charles Davenant (1656–1714) wrote "A Discourse upon Grants and Resumptions showing how our ancestors have proceeded with such ministers as have procured to themselves grants of the Crown Revenue, and that the Forfeited Estates ought to be applied toward the Payment of Publick Debts" (1700).

The Pict and painted Briton, treach'rous Scot,
By hunger, theft, and rapine, hither brought.
Norwegian pirates, buccaneering Danes,
Whose red-hair'd offspring ev'rywhere remains.
Who, join'd with Norman-French, compound the breed
From whence your true-born Englishmen proceed.
And lest by length of time it be pretended,
The climate may this modern breed ha' mended;
Wise Providence, to keep us where we are,
Mixes us daily with exceeding care:
We have been Europe's sink, the jakes where she
Voids all her offal out-cast progeny.
From our fifth Henry's time the strolling bands
Of banish'd fugitives from neighb'ring lands,
Have here a certain sanctuary found:
The eternal refuge of the vagabond,
Where in but half a common age of time,
Borr'wing new blood and manners from the clime,
Proudly they learn all mankind to contemn,
And all their race are true-born Englishmen.
Dutch, Walloons,[1] Flemmings, Irishmen, and Scots,
Vaudois[2] and Valtolins,[3] and Huguenots,
In good Queen Bess's charitable reign,
Suppli'd us with three hundred thousand men:
Religion, God we thank thee, sent them hither,
Priests, Protestants, the devil and all together:
Of all professions, and of ev'ry trade,
All that were persecuted or afraid;
Whether for debt or other crimes they fled,
David at Hackelah was still their head.[4]
The offspring of this miscellaneous crowd,
Had not their new plantations long enjoy'd,
But they grew Englishmen, and rais'd their votes,
At foreign shoals of interloping Scots.
The royal branch from Pict-land[5] did succeed,

[1] inhabitants of southern Belgium.
[2] Waldensians, a dissenting sect most numerous in Piedmont in Italy, and in Dauphine and Provence in France, founded about 1170 and much persecuted in the 16th and 17th centuries.
[3] inhabitants of Valtellina, in northern Italy.
[4] See I Samuel: xxii, 2; and xxiii, 19.
[5] James VI of Scotland and I of England.

With troops of Scots and scabs from North-by-Tweed;
The seven first years[1] of his pacific reign,
Made him and half his nation Englishmen.
Scots from the northern frozen banks of Tay,
With packs and plods came whigging[2] all away:
Thick as the locusts which in Egypt swarm'd,[3]
With pride and hungry hopes completely arm'd;
With native truth, diseases, and no money,
Plunder'd our Canaan of the milk and honey.
Here they grew quickly lords and gentlemen,
And all their race are true-born Englishmen.
The civil wars, the common purgative,
Which always use to make the nation thrive,
Made way for all that strolling congregation,
Which throng'd in pious Charles's restoration.
The royal refugee our breed restores,
With foreign courtiers, and with foreign whores:
And carefully re-peopled us again,
Throughout his lazy, long, lascivious reign,
With such a blest and true-born English fry,
As much illustrates our nobility.

French cooks, Scotch pedlars, and Italian whores,
Were all made lords, or lords' progenitors.
Beggars and bastards by this new creation,
Much multipli'd the peerage of the nation;
Who will be all, ere one short age runs o'er,
As true-born lords as those we had before.
Then to recruit the commons he prepares,
And heal the latent breaches of the wars:
The pious purpose better to advance,
H' invites the banish'd Protestants of France:
Hither for God's sake and their own they fled,
Some for religion came, and some for bread:
Two hundred thousand pair of wooden shoes,
Who, God be thank'd, had nothing left to lose;
To Heav'n's great praise did for religion fly,
To make us starve our poor in charity.

[1] Perhaps with reference to the seven lean years that ate up the seven years of plenty in Pharaoh's dream see Genesis, xli
[2] jogging along. [3] See Exodus, x, 4f.

In ev'ry port they plant their fruitful train,
To get a race of true-born Englishmen:
Whose children will, when riper years they see,
Be as ill-natur'd and as proud as we:
Call themselves English, foreigners despise,
Be surly like us all, and just as wise.
 Thus from a mixture of all kinds began,
That het'rogeneous thing, an Englishman:
In eager rapes, and furious lust begot,
Betwixt a painted Briton and a Scot:
Whose gend'ring offspring quickly learnt to bow,
And yoke their heifers to the Roman plough:
From whence a mongrel half-bred race there came,
With neither name nor nation, speech nor fame,
In whose hot veins new mixtures quickly ran,
Infus'd betwixt a Saxon and a Dane.
While their rank daughters, to their parents just,
Receiv'd all nations with promiscuous lust.
This nauseous brood directly did contain
The well-extracted blood of Englishmen.
 Which medley, canton'd[1] in a heptarchy,
A rhapsody of nations to supply,
Among themselves maintain'd eternal wars,
And still the ladies lov'd the conquerors.
 The Western Angles all the rest subdu'd,
A bloody nation, barbarous and rude;
Who by the tenure of the sword possest,
One part of Britain, and subdu'd the rest:
And as great things denominate the small,
The conqu'ring part gave title to the whole;
The Scot, Pict, Briton, Roman, Dane submit,
And with the English-Saxon all unite:
And these the mixture have so close pursu'd,
The very name and memory's subdu'd;
No Roman now, no Briton does remain;
Wales strove to separate, but strove in vain:[2]
The silent nations undistinguish'd fall,
And Englishman's the common name for all.
Fate jumbl'd them together, God knows how;

[1] divided into portions.

[2] Harold in 1063 invaded Wales and reduced it to submission. Edward I put an end to the practical independence of Wales in 1284.

Whate'er they were, they're true-born English now.
The wonder which remains is at our pride,
To value that which all wise men deride.
For Englishmen to boast of generation,
Cancels their knowledge, and lampoons the nation.
A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
In speech an irony, in fact a fiction;
A banter made to be a test of fools,
Which those that use it justly ridicules;
A metaphor invented to express
A man akin to all the universe.

(1701)

John Philips

1676–1709

JOHN PHILIPS, whose father was both archdeacon of Shropshire and vicar of Bampton, Oxfordshire, was born on December 30, 1676. He was elected scholar of Winchester School in 1691, where, it is recorded, he was so popular that he could with impunity affront schoolboy prejudices by having his long locks combed while he read Milton and the other boys were at play. In 1697, he matriculated at Christ's Church, Oxford, where also he was a general favorite; here he abandoned the study of medicine for literature. His first and best poem, "The Splendid Shilling," which Addison called the "finest burlesque poem in the English language," was written in 1701 and in the same year came out in a "Collection of Poems," published by Daniel Brown and Benjamin Tooke, pirates both. A correct folio edition, without the author's name on the title page, appeared in 1705. Through this poem, Philips was brought to the attention of Robert Harley and Henry St. John, and was commissioned by them to write verses on the battle of Blenheim as a Tory counterpart of Addison's "Cato"; and the result was "Blenheim, a Poem, Inscribed to the Right Honourable Robert Harley, Esq." (1705), a poor thing, for which Philips himself apologized. The first book of "Cyder" had been written by Philips when he was in Oxford, the second in London, and in 1707 Tonson agreed to pay forty guineas for the two books, with ten guineas for a second edition. The poem was published in 1708. It is an imitation of Vergil's "Georgics" and is written in Miltonic blank verse. Philips died on February 15, 1709, and was buried in Hereford Cathedral.

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Burlesque Plays and Poems. [Contains "The Splendid Shilling."] 1885.

Poems of John Philips. Edited by M. G. Lloyd Thomas. A Percy Reprint. 1927.

The Splendid Shilling

Sing, heavenly Muse. . . .
Things unattempted yet, in prose or rhyme,
A shilling, breeches, and chimeras dire.

HAPPY the man, who void of cares and strife,
In silken, or in leathern purse retains
A Splendid Shilling: he nor hears with pain
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale;
But with his friends, when nightly mists arise,
To Juniper's, Magpie,[1] or Town Hall repairs:
Where, mindful of the nymph, whose wanton eye
Transfix'd his soul, and kindled amorous flames,
Cloe, or Phillis; he each circling glass
Wisheth her health, and joy, and equal love.
Mean while he smokes, and laughs at merry tale,
Or pun ambiguous, or conundrum quaint.
But I, whom griping penury surrounds,
And hunger, sure attendant upon want,
With scanty offals,[2] and small acid tiff[3]
(Wretched repast!) my meagre corps sustain:
Then solitary walk, or doze at home
In garret vile, and with a warming puff
Regale chill'd fingers; or from tube as black
As winter-chimney, or well-polish'd jet,
Exhale mundungus,[4] ill-perfuming scent:
Not blacker tube, nor of a shorter size
Smokes Cambro-Briton[5] (vers'd in pedigree
Sprung from Cadwalader and Arthur, kings
Full famous in romantic tale) when he
O'er many a craggy hill, and barren cliff,
Upon a cargo of fam'd Cestrian[6] cheese,
High over-shadowing rides, with a design
To vend his wares, or at th' Arvonian mart,[7]
Or Maridunum,[8] or the ancient town

[1] Two noted alehouses in Oxford, 1700.—Bell's edition, 1799. Thomas suggests that Juniper may be a nickname for a landlord.
[2] crumbs; fragments. [3] poor, weak, or small liquor.—*N.E.D.*
[4] bad-smelling tobacco. [5] Welshman. [6] from Chester or Cheshire.
[7] Arvona, the modern Carnarvon.—*Thomas.*
[8] A Roman station in South West Wales, the modern Carmarthen.

Yclep'd Brechinia,[1] or where Vaga's stream[2]
Encircles Ariconium,[3] fruitful soil!
Whence flow nectareous wines, that well may vie
With Massic,[4] Setin,[5] or renown'd Falern.[6]
Thus, while my joyless minutes tedious flow
With looks demure, and silent pace, a Dun,
Horrible Monster! hated by gods and men,
To my aerial citadel ascends;
With vocal heel thrice thund'ring at my gates,
With hideous accent thrice he calls; I know
The voice ill-boding, and the solemn sound.
What should I do? or whither turn? Amaz'd,
Confounded, to the dark recess I fly
Of woodhole; straight my bristling hairs erect
Through sudden fear; a chilly sweat bedews
My shud'ring limbs, and (wonderful to tell!)
My tongue forgets her faculty of speech;
So horrible he seems! his faded brow,
Intrench'd with many a frown, and conic beard,
And spreading band,[7] admir'd by modern saints,
Disastrous acts forebode; in his right hand
Long scrolls of paper solemnly he waves,
With characters, and figures dire inscrib'd,
Grievous to mortal eyes; (ye Gods avert
Such plagues from righteous men!) behind him stalks
Another monster, not unlike himself,
Sullen of aspect, by the vulgar call'd
A Catchpole,[8] whose polluted hands the gods
With force incredible, and magic charms
First have endu'd, if he his ample palm
Should haply on ill-fated shoulder lay
Of debtor, straight his body, to the touch

[1] the modern Brecon. [2] the river Wye.

[3] Near the village of the modern Weston-under-Penyard, on the banks of the Wye. It was, in the fourth century, A.D., the centre of the iron-smelting industry.—*Thomas.*

[4] A famous wine from Monte Massico, on the borders of Campania and Latium.

[5] The wine of Satia, a city of Latium in Italy.

[6] A famous wine from the Falernian Field in the Campania in Italy.

[7] The development of a falling collar into a pair of strips (now called bands) hanging down in front as part of a conventional dress, clerical, legal, or academical.—*N.E.D.*

[8] A warrant officer who arrests for debt; a bum-bailiff.—*N.E.D.*

Obsequious, (as whilom knights were wont)
To some enchanted castle is convey'd,
Where gates impregnable, and coercive chains
In durance strict detain him, till in form
Of money, Pallas sets the captive free.
 Beware, ye debtors, when ye walk, beware,
Be circumspect; oft with insidious ken
This caitiff eyes your steps aloof, and oft
Lies perdue[1] in a nook or gloomy cave,
Prompt to enchant some inadvertent wretch
With his unhallow'd touch. So (poets sing)
Grimalkin[2] to domestic vermin sworn
An everlasting foe, with watchful eye,
Lies nightly brooding o'er a chinky gap,
Portending her fell claws, to thoughtless mice
Sure ruin. So her disembowell'd web
Arachne[3] in a hall, or kitchen spreads,
Obvious[4] to vagrant flies: she secret stands
Within her woven cell; the humming prey,
Regardless of their fate, rush on the toils
Inextricable, nor will aught avail
Their arts, nor arms, nor shapes of lovely hue;
The wasp insidious, and the buzzing drone,
And butterfly proud of expanded wings
Distinct[5] with gold, entangled in her snares,
Useless resistance make: with eager strides,
She tow'ring flies to her expected spoils;
Then, with envenom'd jaws the vital blood
Drinks of reluctant foes, and to her cave
Their bulky carcasses triumphant drags.
 So pass my days. But when nocturnal shades
This world envelop, and th' inclement air
Persuades men to repel benumming frosts
With pleasant wines, and crackling blaze of wood;
Me lonely sitting, nor the glimmering light
Of make-weight candle,[6] nor the joyous talk
Of loving friend delights; distress'd, forlorn,
Amidst the horrors of the tedious night,

[1] lies in ambush. [2] an old she-cat. [3] a spider. [4] in the way of.
[5] Marked so as to be distinguished, adorned.—*N.E.D.*
[6] A small candle thrown in with purchases to make up a certain weight.

Darkling I sigh, and feed with dismal thoughts
My anxious mind, or sometimes mournful verse
Indite, and sing of groves and myrtle shades,
Or desp'rate lady near a purling stream,
Or lover pendent on a willow tree:
Mean while I labour with eternal drought,
And restless wish, and rave; my parched throat
Finds no relief, nor heavy eyes repose:
But if a slumber haply does invade
My weary limbs, my fancy's still awake,
Thoughtful of drink, and eager in a dream,
Tipples imaginary pots of ale;
In vain; awake, I find the settled thirst
Still gnawing, and the pleasant phantom curse.
Thus do I live from pleasure quite debarr'd,
Nor taste the fruits that the sun's genial rays
Mature, John-apple,[1] nor the downy peach,
Nor walnut in rough furrow'd coat secure,
Nor medlar,[2] fruit delicious in decay;
Afflictions great! yet greater still remain:
My galligaskins[3] that have long withstood
The winter's fury, and encroaching frosts,
By time subdu'd (what will not time subdue!)
An horrid chasm disclose, with orifice
Wide, discontinuous; at which the winds
Eurus[4] and Auster,[5] and the dreadful force
Of Boreas,[6] that congeals the Cronian waves,[7]
Tumultuous enter with dire chilling blasts,
Portending agues. Thus a well-fraught ship,
Long sail'd secure, or through th' Ægean deep,
Or the Ionian, till cruising near
The Lilybean shore,[8] with hideous crush

[1] Same as applejohn, a kind of apple said to keep two years and to be in perfection when shrivelled and withered.—*N.E.D.*

[2] "You'll be rotten ere you be half ripe, and that's the right virtue of the medlar."—"As You Like It," III, ii, 125.

[3] loose breeches. [4] the east wind [5] the hot south wind. [6] the north wind.

[7] The Cronian Sea, the northern frozen sea:

> Two Polar winds blowing adverse
> Upon the Cronian Sea.—"Paradise Lost," x, 290.

[8] On the west coast of Sicily. Philips evidently did not consult his map

On Scylla, or Charybdis[1] (dang'rous rocks)
She strikes rebounding, whence the shatter'd oak,
So fierce a shock unable to withstand,
Admits the sea; in at the gaping side
The crowding waves gush with impetuous rage,
Resistless, overwhelming; horrors seize
The mariners; death in their eyes appears,
They stare, they lave, they pump, they swear, they pray:
(Vain efforts!) still the battering waves rush in
Implacable, till delug'd by the foam,
The ship sinks found'ring in the vast abyss.

(1701)

[1] Scylla and Charybdis are on the east coast of Sicily and west of Italy.

William Walsh

1663–1708

WILLIAM WALSH, the son of Joseph Walsh, was born in Worcestershire, at Abberley, the family seat, in 1663. In 1678, he became a member of Wadham College, Oxford, but left without taking a degree. He entered Parliament for Worcestershire in 1698, and was twice reëlected, in 1701 and in 1702; in 1705, he sat for Richmond, in Yorkshire. During this period, his political sympathies were evidenced chiefly in his advocacy of the Whig war policy and in his support of the Protestant succession. From 1702 to his death, in 1708, Walsh held the post of Gentleman of the Horse. A fellow-writer, John Dennis, described Walsh as "ostentatiously splendid in his dress." Walsh himself amplified this description by confessing that he was "burdened with an amorous heart," and that "there was not one folly he had not committed in his devotion to women, with the exception of marriage." The most notable of Walsh's prose works, a "Dialogue concerning Women, being a Defence of the Sex," was published in 1691. His poems first appeared in Tonson's *Miscellany*, Part IV, in 1716. What Walsh is best remembered for, however, is his friendship with Pope. It was he who advised Pope to seek to be a "correct" poet, that being, he believed, "the only way of excellency." Pope, in turn, eulogized Walsh in his "Essay on Criticism" and, later, in his "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot." Walsh died on March 18, 1708.

EDITIONS

Anderson: "British Poets," Vol. VI. 1795.
Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. VIII. 1810.

Sonnet on Death[1]

WHAT has this bugbear Death that's worth our care?
After a life in pain and sorrow past,
After deluding hope and dire despair,
Death only gives us quiet at the last.

[1] This sonnet form is rather unusual, being *abab, bcbc, ddc, eec.* Probably the *c*-rime of the sestet is an oversight.

How strangely are our love and hate misplac'd!
Freedom we seek, and yet from freedom flee;
Courting those tyrant-sins that chain us fast,
And shunning death, that only sets us free.
'Tis not a foolish fear of future pains,
(Why should they fear who keep their souls from stains?)
That makes me dread thy terrors, Death, to see:
'Tis not the loss of riches, or of fame,
Or the vain toys the vulgar pleasures name;
'Tis nothing, Celia, but the losing thee.

(c. 1705)

The Despairing Lover

Distracted with care,
For Phillis the fair;
Since nothing could move her,
Poor Damon her lover,
Resolves in despair
No longer to languish,
Nor bear so much anguish;
But, mad with his love,
To a precipice goes;
Where a leap from above
Would soon finish his woes.

When in rage he came there,
Beholding how steep
The sides did appear,
And the bottom how deep;
His torments projecting,[1]
And sadly reflecting,
That a lover forsaken
A new love may get;
But a neck when once broken,
Can never be set:
And, that he could die
Whenever he would;

[1] Putting or setting forth his torments so as to get them in their proper relation.

But, that he could live
But as long as he could:
How grievous soever
The torment might grow,
He scorn'd to endeavour
To finish it so.
But bold, unconcern'd
At thoughts of the pain,
He calmly return'd
To his cottage again.

(1704)

Song

Of all the torments, all the cares,
With which our lives are curst;
Of all the plagues a lover bears,
Sure rivals are the worst!
By partners, in each other kind,
Afflictions easier grow;
In love alone we hate to find
Companions of our woe.

Sylvia, for all the pangs you see,
Are lab'ring in my breast;
I beg not you would favour me,
Would you but slight the rest!
How great soe'er your rigours are,
With them alone I'll cope;
I can endure my own despair,
But not another's hope.

(1704)

Matthew Prior

1667–1721

MATTHEW PRIOR was born of very humble parents on July 23, 1667, in Middlesex, and was baptized at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, discovered Prior as a boy with a copy of Horace in his hand, and he was so pleased with his metrical rendering of one of the odes that he sent him to Westminster School, to be under the redoubtable Dr. Busby. In 1683, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, on a scholarship, and he graduated in 1686. The year following, he collaborated with Charles Montagu, one of his school and university friends, in writing "The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd to the Story of the Country-Mouse and the City-Mouse." In 1688, Prior was made a fellow of St. John's, and while there wrote an ode which brought him to the attention of the Earl of Exeter. Two years later Prior entered the diplomatic service, being made secretary to Lord Dursley, envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary in the English embassy at the Hague. Here he contributed poems to Dryden's *Miscellanies* and wrote interesting letters full of gossip. He joined poetically in the universal lament over the death of the Queen in 1695. He found his true measure in the lighter touch of "The Secretary"—"On my left hand my Horace, a nymph on my right." In the negotiations which led up to the Peace of Ryswick, he had great responsibilities, which he fulfilled with much credit. He was then transferred to Paris, and was not free to return to London till November, 1699. Then he was made Under-Secretary of State, going to and from Paris on the business of the second partition treaty. In 1700, Cambridge gave him an honorary M.A., and he was made Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. He was a Member of Parliament for four months in 1701, and, deserting his Whig allies, he joined the Tories, Harley and St. John. All the time he was writing delectable trifles, formal odes to the Queen, and well-polished heroic couplets. But he lost his public offices in 1707, and, as a poor compensation, received the secretaryship to the Bishop of Winchester.

Prior's first collection of verse came out in 1709. Soon after, his Tory activities and his knowledge of languages led St. John to appoint him Commissioner of Customs. In June, 1711, he went to Paris with England's preliminary demands, and in August, 1712, to France as

ambassador, where he remained until after the peace was signed in April, 1713. The death of Anne in 1714 deprived him of his commissionership, and when he returned to England the next year he was arrested by order of the Commons, not being released till 1717. During his confinement he wrote "Alma: or, the Progress of the Mind." To help him financially, his friends got out a sumptuous folio edition of his poems, which brought him £4000, and to this Lord Harley added another four thousand for the purchase of Down Hall in Essex, a gift which prompted his joyous ballad of "Down Hall." Lord Harley's daughter was the "little Peggy" of the poems, who said that he made himself "beloved of every living thing in the house—master, child, and servant, human creature, or animal." He died on September 18, 1721, when on a visit to the Earl of Oxford, at Wimpole, and was buried in Westminster Abbey; "where on a monument for which [said Dr. Johnson], *as the last piece of human vanity*, he left five hundred pounds, is engraven" an epitaph of over half as many Latin words.

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To a Child of Quality Five Years Old

THE AUTHOR FORTY

LORDS, knights, and squires, the num'rous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summon'd, by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The pow'r they have to be obey'd.

Nor quality, nor reputation,
Forbid me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five years old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For while she makes her silk-worms beds
With all the tender things I swear,
Whilst all the house my passion reads,
In papers round her baby's hair,

She may receive and own my flame,
For though the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too alas! when she shall tear
The lines some younger rival sends,
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends;

For, as our diff'rent ages move,
'Tis so ordain'd, would fate but mend it,
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it.

(1704)

A Letter to the Honourable Lady Miss Margaret-Cavendish-Holles-Harley[1]

My noble, lovely, little Peggy,
Let this, my first epistle, beg ye,
At dawn of morn, and close of even,
To lift your heart and hands to heaven:
In double beauty say your pray'r,
Our father first, then *notre pere;*
And, dearest child, along the day,
In ev'ry thing you do and say,
Obey and please my Lord and Lady,
So God shall love, and angels aid, ye.

If to these precepts you attend,
No second-letter need I send,
And so I rest your constant friend,

M. P.

(Publ. 1740)

To a Lady

She Refusing to Continue a Dispute with Me and Leaving Me in the Argument

Spare, gen'rous victor, spare the slave,
Who did unequal war pursue;
That more than triumph he might have,
In being overcome by you.

In the dispute whate'er I said,
My heart was by my tongue bely'd;
And in my looks you might have read,
How much I argu'd on your side.

You, far from danger as from fear,
Might have sustain'd an open fight:
For seldom your opinions err:
Your eyes are always in the right.

[1] Lady Harley, afterwards Duchess of Portland, was the daughter of Lord Harley

Why, fair one, would you not rely
On Reason's force with Beauty's join'd?
Could I their prevalence deny;
I must at once be deaf and blind.

Alas! not hoping to subdue,
I only to the fight aspir'd:
To keep the beauteous foe in view
Was all the glory I desir'd.

But she, howe'er of vict'ry sure,
Contemns the wreath too long delay'd;
And, arm'd with more immediate pow'r,
Calls cruel silence to her aid.

Deeper to wound, she shuns the fight:
She drops her arms, to gain the field:
Secures her conquest by her flight;
And triumphs, when she seems to yield.

So when the Parthian turn'd his steed,
And from the hostile camp withdrew;
With cruel skill the backward reed
He sent; and as he fled, he slew.

(1704)

The Dying Hadrian to His Soul[1]

Poor, little, pretty, flutt'ring thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing
To take thy flight, thou know'st not whither?

Thy humorous vein, thy pleasing folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot:

[1] "Adriani Morientis ad Animam Suam":

Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes, Comesque Corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
Pallidula, rigida, nudula?
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca.—(See p. 194.)

And pensive, wav'ring, melancholy,
Thou dread'st and hop'st, thou know'st not what.

(1704)

An English Padlock

Miss Danäe, when fair and young
(As Horace has divinely sung)[1]
Could not be kept from Jove's embrace
By doors of steel, and walls of brass.
The reason of the thing is clear;
Would Jove the naked truth aver:
Cupid was with him of the party;
And show'd himself sincere and hearty:
For, give that whipster but his errand;
He takes my Lord Chief Justice' warrant:
Dauntless as Death away he walks;
Breaks the doors open; snaps the locks;
Searches the parlour, chamber, study;
Nor stops, 'till he has Culprit's body.

Since this has been authentic truth,
By Age deliver'd down to Youth;
Tell us, mistaken Husband, tell us,
Why so mysterious, why so jealous?
Does the restraint, the bolt, the bar
Make us less curious, her less fair?
The spy, which does this treasure keep,
Does she ne'er say her pray'rs, nor sleep?
Does she to no excess incline?
Does she fly music, mirth, and wine?
Or have not gold and flatt'ry pow'r,
To purchase one unguarded hour?

Your care does further yet extend:
That spy is guarded by your friend.—
But has this friend nor eye, nor heart?
May he not feel the cruel dart,
Which, soon or late, all mortals feel?

[1] Horace: "Odes," iii, 16.

May he not, with too tender zeal,
Give the fair pris'ner cause to see,
How much he wishes, she were free?
May he not craftily infer
The rules of friendship too severe,
Which chain him to a hated trust;
Which make him wretched, to be just?
And may not she, this darling she,
Youthful and healthy, flesh and blood,
Easy with him, ill-us'd by thee,
Allow this logic to be good?

Sir, will your questions never end?
I trust to neither spy nor friend.
In short, I keep her from the sight
Of ev'ry human face.—She'll write.—
From pen and paper she's debarr'd.—
Has she a bodkin and a card?
She'll prick her mind.—She will, you say:
But how shall she that mind convey?
I keep her in one room: I lock it:
The key (look here) is in this pocket.
The key-hole, is that left? Most certain.
She'll thrust her letter through—Sir Martin.

Dear angry friend, what must be done?
Is there no way?—There is but one.
Send her abroad; and let her see,
That all this mingled mass, which she
Being forbidden longs to know,
Is a dull farce, an empty show,
Powder, and pocket-glass, and beau;
A staple of romance and lies,
False tears, and real perjuries:
Where sighs and looks are bought and sold;
And love is made but to be told:
Where the fat bawd, and lavish heir
The spoils of ruin'd beauty share:
And Youth seduc'd from friends and fame,
Must give up Age to want and shame.

Let her behold the frantic scene,
The women wretched, false the men:
And when, these certain ills to shun,
She would to thy embraces run;
Receive her with extended arms:
Seem more delighted with her charms:
Wait on her to the park and play:
Put on good humour; make her gay:
Be to her virtues very kind:
Be to her faults a little blind:
Let all her ways be unconfin'd;
And clap your padlock—on her mind.

(1705)

A Simile

Dear Thomas, didst thou never pop
Thy head into a tin-man's shop?
There, Thomas, didst thou never see
('T is but by way of simile)
A squirrel spend his little rage,
In jumping round a rolling cage?
The cage, as either side turn'd up,
Striking a ring of bells a-top?—

Mov'd in the orb, pleas'd with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs:
But here or there, turn wood or wire,
He never gets two inches higher.

So fares it with those merry blades,
That frisk it under Pindus'[1] shades.
In noble songs and lofty odes,
They tread on stars, and talk with gods;
Still dancing in an airy round,
Still pleas'd with their own verses' sound;
Brought back, how fast soe'er they go,
Always aspiring, always low.

(1707)

[1] a lofty mountain range in northern Greece.

An Ode

THE merchant, to secure his treasure,
Conveys it in a borrow'd name:
Euphelia serves to grace my measure;
But Cloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre,
Upon Euphelia's toilet lay;
When Cloe noted her desire,
That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise;
But with my numbers mix my sighs:
And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,
I fix my soul on Cloe's eyes.

Fair Cloe blush'd: Euphelia frown'd:
I sung and gaz'd: I play'd and trembl'd:
And Venus to the Loves around
Remark'd, how ill we all dissembl'd.

(1718)

Cupid Mistaken

AS AFTER noon, one summer's day,
Venus stood bathing in a river;
Cupid a-shooting went that way,
New strung his bow, new fill'd his quiver.

With skill he chose his sharpest dart:
With all his might his bow he drew:
Swift to his beauteous parent's heart
The too well-guided arrow flew.

I faint! I die! the goddess cried:
O cruel, could'st thou find none other,
To wreck thy spleen on? Parricide!
Like Nero, thou hast slain thy mother.

Poor Cupid sobbing scarce could speak;
Indeed, Mamma, I did not know ye:
Alas! how easy my mistake?
I took you for your likeness, Cloe.

(Publ. 1718)

Venus Mistaken

When Cloe's picture was to Venus shown;
Surpriz'd, the Goddess took it for her own.
And what, said she, does this bold painter mean?
When was I bathing thus, and naked seen?

Pleas'd Cupid heard, and check'd his mother's pride:
And who's blind now, Mamma? the urchin cried.
'Tis Cloe's eye, and cheek, and lip, and breast:
Friend Howard's[1] genius fancied all the rest.

(Publ. 1718)

A Better Answer

Dear Cloe, how blubber'd is that pretty face?
Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all uncurl'd:
Prithee quit this caprice; and (as old Falstaff says)
Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this world.

How can'st thou presume, thou hast leave to destroy
The beauties, which Venus but lent to thy keeping?
Those looks were design'd to inspire love and joy:
More ord'nary eyes may serve people for weeping.

To be vext at a trifle or two that I writ,
Your judgment at once, and my passion you wrong:
You take that for fact, which will scarce be found wit:
Od's life! must one swear to the truth of a song?

What I speak, my fair Cloe, and what I write, shews
The diff'rence there is betwixt nature and art:

[1] Prior addressed an ode to Mr. Howard, whom he characterized as "emulous of the Grœcian art."

I court others in verse; but I love thee in prose;
And they have my whimsies; but thou hast my heart.

The god of us verse-men (you know child), the sun,
How after his journeys he sets up his rest:
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run;
At night he reclines on his Thetis's breast.[1]

So when I am weary'd with wand'ring all day;
To thee my delight in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way:
They were but my visits; but thou art my home.

Then finish, dear Cloe, this pastoral war;
And let us like Horace and Lydia agree:
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,
As he was a poet sublimer than me.

(1718)

An Epitaph

INTERR'D beneath this marble stone,
Lie Saunt'ring Jack, and Idle Joan.
While rolling three score years and one
Did round this globe their courses run;
If human things went ill or well;
If changing empires rose or fell;
The morning past, the evening came,
And found this couple still the same.
They walk'd and eat, good folks: What then?
Why then they walk'd and eat again:
They soundly slept the night away:
They did just nothing all the day:
And having bury'd children four,
Would not take pains to try for more.
Nor sister either had, nor brother:
They seemed just tally'd for each other.

[1] As goddess of the sea, Thetis may be said to receive the sun as he descends into the ocean.

Their moral and economy
Most perfectly they made agree:
Each virtue kept its proper bound,
Nor trespass'd on the other's ground.
Nor fame, nor censure they regarded:
They neither punish'd, nor rewarded.
He car'd not what the footmen did:
Her maids she neither prais'd, nor chid:
So ev'ry servant took his course;
And bad at first, they all grew worse.
Slothful disorder fill'd his stable;
And sluttish plenty deck'd her table.
Their beer was strong; their wine was port;
Their meal was large; their grace was short.
They gave the poor the remnant-meat,
Just when it grew not fit to eat.

They paid the church and parish-rate;
And took, but read not the receipt;
For which they claim'd their Sunday's due,
Of slumb'ring in an upper pew.

No man's defects sought they to know;
So never made themselves a foe.
No man's good deeds did they commend;
So never rais'd themselves a friend.
Nor cherish'd they relations poor:
That might decrease their present store:
Nor barn nor house did they repair:
That might oblige their future heir.

They neither added, nor confounded:
They neither wanted, nor abounded.
Each Christmas they accompts did clear;
And wound their bottom[1] round the year.
Nor tear, nor smile did they employ
At news of public grief, or joy.
When bells were rung, and bonfires made;
If ask'd, they ne'er deny'd their aid:
Their jug was to the ringers carry'd;
Who ever either dy'd, or marry'd.

[1] A bottom is a skein, or ball of thread.

Their billet at the fire was found;
Who ever was depos'd, or crown'd.

Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise;
They would not learn, nor could advise:
Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
They led—a kind of—as it were:
Nor wish'd nor car'd, nor laugh'd, nor cry'd:
And so they liv'd; and so they dy'd.

(1718)

For My Own Monument

I

As DOCTORS give physic by way of prevention,
Matt alive and in health, of his tomb-stone took care,
For delays are unsafe, and his pious intention
May haply be never fulfill'd by his heir.

II

Then take Matt's word for it, the sculptor is paid,
That the figure is fine, pray believe your own eye,
Yet credit but lightly what more may be said,
For we flatter ourselves, and teach marble to lie.

III

Yet counting as far as to fifty his years,
His virtues and vices were as other men's are,
High hopes he conceiv'd, and he smother'd great fears,
In a life party-colour'd, half pleasure, half care.

IV

Nor to business a drudge, nor to faction a slave,
He strove to make int'rest and freedom agree,
In public employments industrious and grave,
And alone with his friends, Lord how merry was he.

V

Now in equipage stately, now humbly on foot,
Both fortunes he try'd, but to neither would trust,
And whirl'd in the round, as the wheel turn'd about,
He found riches had wings, and knew man was but dust.

VI

This verse little polish'd, though mighty sincere
Sets neither his titles nor merit to view,
It says that his relics collected lie here,
And no mortal yet knows too if this may be true.

VII

Fierce robbers there are that infest the highway,
So Matt may be kill'd, and his bones never found,
False witness at court, and fierce tempests at sea,
So Matt may yet chance to be hang'd, or be drown'd.

VIII

If his bones lie in earth, roll in sea, fly in air,
To fate we must yield, and the thing is the same,
And if passing thou giv'st him a smile, or a tear,
He cares not—yet pr'ythee be kind to his fame.

(Publ. 1740)

Jinny the Just[1]

Releas'd from the noise of the butcher and baker,
Who, my old friends be thanked, did seldom forsake her,
And from the soft duns of my landlord the Quaker;

From chiding the footmen and watching the lasses,
From Nell that burn'd milk, and Tom that broke glasses
(Sad mischiefs through which a good housekeeper passes!)

From some real care but more fancied vexation,
From a life party-colour'd, half reason, half passion,
Here lies after all the best Wench in the Nation.

[1] Reprinted by courtesy of The Macmillan Company.

From the Rhine to the Po, from the Thames to the Rhone,
Joanna or Janneton, Jinny or Joan,
Twas all one to her by what name she was known.

For the idiom of words very little she heeded,
Provided the matter she drove at succeeded,
She took and gave languages just as she needed.

So for kitchen and market, for bargain and sale,
She paid English or Dutch or French down on the nail,[1]
But in telling a story she sometimes did fail.

Then begging excuse as she happen'd to stammer
With respect to her betters but none to her grammar,
Her blush help'd her out and her jargon became her.

Her habit and mien she endeavour'd to frame
To the different gout[2] of the place where she came,
Her outside still chang'd, but her inside the same:

At the Hague in her slippers and hair as the mode is,
At Paris all falbalow'd[3] fine as a goddess,
And at censuring London in smock sleeves[4] and bodice,

She order'd affairs that few people could tell
In what part about her that mixture did dwell
Of Vrough; or Mistress, or Medemoiselle.

For her sirname and race let the Heralds e'en answer;
Her own proper worth was enough to advance her,
And he who lik'd her, little valu'd her grandsire.

But from what house so ever her lineage may come,
I wish my own Jinny but out of her tomb,
Though all her relations were there in her room.

Of such terrible beauty she never could boast
As with absolute sway o'er all hearts rules the roast,
When J—— bawls out to the Chair for a toast.

[1] on the spot; at once. [2] taste.
[3] A falbala or falbalow is a trimming for a woman's petticoat; a flounce, furbelow: hence, the verb.
[4] the sleeves attached to a woman's undergarment.

But of good household features her person was made,
Nor by faction cry'd up nor of censure afraid,
And her beauty was rather for use than parade.

Her blood so well mixt and flesh so well pasted,
That though her youth faded her comeliness lasted;
The blue was wore off, but the plum was well tasted.

Less smooth than her skin and less white than her breast
Was this polisht stone beneath which she lies prest:
Stop, reader, and sigh while thou thinkst on the rest.

With a just trim of virtue her soul was endu'd,
Not affectedly pious nor secretly lewd,
She cut even between the coquette and the prude.

Her will with her duty so equally stood
That seldom oppos'd she was commonly good,
And did pretty well, doing just what she would.

Declining all pow'r she found means to persuade,
Was then most regarded when most she obey'd,
The Mistress in truth when she seem'd but the Maid.

Such care of her own proper actions she took
That on other folks' lives she had no time to look;
So censure and praise were struck out of her book.

Her thought still confin'd to its own little sphere,
She minded not who did excel or did err
But just as the matter related to her.

Then too when her private tribunal was rear'd,
Her mercy so mix'd with her judgment appear'd
That her foes were condemn'd and her friends always clear'd.

Her religion so well with her learning did suit
That in practice sincere, and in controverse mute,
She shew'd she knew better to live than dispute.

Some parts of the Bible by heart she recited,
And much in historical chapters delighted,
But in points about faith she was something short sighted.

So notions and modes she referr'd to the schools,
And in matters of conscience adher'd to two rules,—
To advise with no bigots, and jest with no fools.

And scrupling but little, enough she believ'd,
By charity ample small sins she retriev'd;
And when she had new clothes she always receiv'd.

Thus still whilst her morning unseen fled away
In ord'ring the linen and making the tea,
That she scarce could have time for the psalms of the day.

And while after dinner the night came so soon
That half she propos'd very seldom was done:
With twenty God bless me's how this day is gone.

While she read and accounted and paid and abated,
Eat and drank, play'd and work'd, laught and cry'd, lov'd and hated,
As answer'd the end of her being created:

In the midst of her age came a cruel disease
Which neither her julips nor receipts could appease;
So down dropp'd her clay, may her soul be at peace.

Retire from this sepulchre all the profane,
You that love for debauch or that marry for gain,
Retire lest ye trouble the Manes of J———.

But thou that know'st love above int'rest or lust,
Strew the myrtle and rose on this once belov'd dust,
And shed one pious tear upon Jinny the Just.

Tread soft on her grave, and do right to her honour;
Let neither rude hand nor ill tongue light upon her;
Do all the small favours that now can be done her.

And when what thou lik't shall return to her clay,
For so I'm persuaded she must do one day,
What ever fantastic J—— Asgil may say,

When as I have done now, thou shalt set up a stone
For something however distinguisht or known,
May some pious friend the misfortune bemoan,
And make thy concern by reflexion his own.

(First printed, 1907)

Bernard Mandeville

1670–1733

BERNARD MANDEVILLE, the son of a physician, was born in Rotterdam, Holland, and was baptized on November 20, 1670. He was educated at the Erasmian School until October, 1685, when he matriculated at the University of Leyden with the intention of studying medicine, though he was entered as a student in philosophy. He graduated with his M.D. degree in March, 1691, and not long after went to England to live permanently. On February 1, 1699, he married Ruth Elizabeth Laurence. In 1703, he published his first English book, "Some Fables after the Easie and Familiar Method of Monsieur de la Fontaine." Thereafter, though he was "one of the most celebrated men in the world" (Kaye), his doings remain unknown. We have the record of his works: we know that "The Grumbling Hive" came out in 1705; the "Fable of the Bees" in 1714, with the second part in 1729; "Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and National Happiness," in 1720; and "A Modest Defence of Publick Stews" in 1724; but very little else besides gossip has come down to us. He died at Hackney, January 21, 1733.

EDITION

The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits. By Bernard Mandeville. With a Commentary, Critical, Historical, and Explanatory, by F. B. Kaye. 2 vols. 1924. [Contains a full bibliography.]

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The Preface to the Fable of the Bees

LAWS and governments are to the political bodies of civil societies, what the vital spirits and life itself are to the natural bodies of animated creatures; and as those that study the anatomy of dead

carcases may see, that the chief organs and nicest springs more immediately required to continue the motion of our machine, are not hard bones, strong muscles and nerves, nor the smooth white skin that so beautifully covers them, but small trifling films and little pipes that are either over-looked, or else seem inconsiderable to vulgar eyes; so they that examine into the nature of men, abstract from art and education, may observe, that what renders him a sociable animal, consists not in his desire of company, good-nature, affability, and other graces of a fair outside; but that his vilest and most hateful qualities are the most necessary accomplishments to fit him for the largest, and, according to the world, the happiest and most flourishing societies.

The following fable, in which what I have said is set forth at large, was printed above eight years ago in a six-penny pamphlet, called, *the Grumbling Hive; or Knaves turn'd Honest;* and being soon after pirated, cry'd about the streets in a half-penny sheet. Since the first publishing of it I have met with several that either wilfully or ignorantly mistaking the design, would have it, that the scope of it was a satire upon virtue and morality, and the whole wrote for the encouragement of vice. This made me resolve, whenever it should be reprinted, some way or other to inform the reader of the real intent this little poem was wrote with. I do not dignify these few loose lines with the name of a poem, that I would have the reader expect any poetry in them, but barely because they are rhyme, and I am in reality puzzled what name to give them; for they are neither heroic nor pastoral, satire, burlesque nor heroi-comic; to be a tale they want probability, and the whole is rather too long for a fable. All I can say of them is, that they are a story told in doggerel, which without the least design of being witty, I have endeavoured to do in as easy and familiar a manner as I was able: the reader shall be welcome to call them what he pleases. 'Twas said of Montaigne, that he was pretty well vers'd in the defects of mankind, but unacquainted with the excellencies of human nature: if I fare no worse, I shall think myself well used.

What country soever in the universe is to be understood by the Bee-hive represented here, it is evident from what is said of the laws and constitution of it, the glory, wealth, power and industry of its inhabitants, that it must be a large, rich and warlike nation, that is happily governed by a limited monarchy. The satire therefore to be met with in the following lines upon the several professions and callings, and almost every degree and station of people, was not made to injure and point to particular persons, but only to shew the vileness of the ingredients that all together compose the wholesome mixture of a well-ordered society; in order to extol the wonderful power of political wisdom, by the help of which so beautiful a machine is

raised from the most contemptible branches. For the main design of the fable, (as is briefly explained in the moral) is to shew the impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant comforts of life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful nation, and at the same time be blessed with all the virtue and innocence that can be wished for in a golden age; from thence to expose the unreasonableness and folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing people, and wonderfully greedy after all the benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those vices and inconveniences, that from the beginning of the world to this present day, have been inseparable from all kingdoms and states that ever were famed for strength, riches, and politeness, at the same time.

To do this, I first slightly touch upon some of the faults and corruptions the several professions and callings are generally charged with. After that I shew that those very vices of every particular person by skilful management, were made subservient to the grandeur and worldly happiness of the whole. Lastly, by setting forth what of necessity must be the consequences of general honesty and virtue, and national temperance, innocence and content, I demonstrate that if mankind could be cured of the failings they are naturally guilty of, they would cease to be capable of being raised into such vast, potent, and polite societies, as they have been under the several great commonwealths and monarchies that have flourished since the creation.

If you ask me why I have done all this, *cui bono?* and what good these notions will produce? truly, besides the reader's diversion, I believe none at all; but if I was asked, what naturally ought to be expected from 'em, I would answer, that in the first place the people, who continually find fault with others, by reading them, would be taught to look at home, and examining their own consciences, be made ashamed of always railing at what they are more or less guilty of themselves; and that in the next, those who are so fond of the ease and comforts, and reap all the benefits that are the consequence of a great and flourishing nation, would learn more patiently to submit to those inconveniences, which no government upon earth can remedy, when they should see the impossibility of enjoying any great share of the first, without partaking likewise of the latter.

This I say ought naturally to be expected from the publishing of these notions, if people were to be made better by any thing that could be said to them; but mankind having for so many ages remained still the same, notwithstanding the many instructive and elaborate writings, by which their amendment has been endeavoured, I am not so vain as to hope for better success for so inconsiderable a trifle.

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Having allowed the small advantage this little whim is likely to produce, I think myself obliged to shew, that it cannot be prejudicial to any; for what is published, if it does no good, ought at least to do no harm: in order to this, I have made some explanatory notes, to which the reader will find himself referred in those passages that seem to be most liable to exceptions.

The censorious that never saw the *Grumbling Hive*, will tell me, that whatever I may talk of the fable, it not taking up a tenth part of the book, was only contrived to introduce the *Remarks;* that instead of clearing up the doubtful or obscure places, I have only pitched upon such as I had a mind to expatiate upon; and that far from striving to extenuate the errors committed before, I have made bad worse, and shewn my self a more bare-faced champion for vice, in the rambling digressions, than I had done in the fable itself.

I shall spend no time in answering these accusations; where men are prejudiced, the best apologies are lost; and I know that those who think it criminal to suppose a necessity of vice in any case whatever, will never be reconciled to any part of the performance; but if this be thoroughly examined, all the offense it can give, must result from the wrong inferences that may perhaps be drawn from it, and which I desire no body to make. When I assert, that vices are inseparable from great and potent societies, and that it is impossible their wealth and grandeur should subsist without, I do not say that the particular members of them who are guilty of any should not be continually reproved, or not be punished for them when they grow into crimes.

There are, I believe, few people in London, of those that are at any time forced to go afoot, but what could wish the streets of it much cleaner than generally they are; while they regard nothing but their own clothes and private conveniency: but when once they come to consider, that what offends them is the result of the plenty, great traffic and opulency of that mighty city, if they have any concern in its welfare, they will hardly ever wish to see the streets of it less dirty. For if we mind the materials of all sorts that must supply such an infinite number of trades and handicrafts, as are always going forward; the vast quantity of victuals, drink and fuel that are daily consumed in it, the waste and superfluities that must be produced from them; the multitudes of horses and other cattle that are always daubing the streets; the carts, coaches and more heavy carriages that are perpetually wearing and breaking the pavement of them; and above all the numberless swarms of people that are continually harassing and trampling through every part of them: if, I say, we mind all these, we shall find that every moment must produce new filth; and considering how far distant the great streets are from the river side, what cost and care soever be bestowed to remove the

nastiness almost as fast as 'tis made, it is impossible London should be more cleanly before it is less flourishing. Now would I ask if a good citizen, in consideration of what has been said, might not assert, that dirty streets are a necessary evil inseparable from the felicity of London, without being the least hindrance to the cleaning of shoes, or sweeping of streets, and consequently without any prejudice either to the blackguard or the scavengers.

But if, without any regard to the interest or happiness of the city, the question was put, what place I thought most pleasant to walk in? No body can doubt but, before the stinking streets of London, I would esteem a fragrant garden, or a shady grove in the country. In the same manner, if laying aside all worldly greatness and vain-glory, I should be asked where I thought it was most probable that men might enjoy true happiness, I would prefer a small peaceable society, in which men, neither envied nor esteemed by neighbors, should be contented to live upon the natural product of the spot they inhabit, to a vast multitude abounding in wealth and power, that should always be conquering others by their arms abroad, and debauching themselves by foreign luxury at home.

Thus much I had said to the reader in the first edition; and have added nothing by way of preface to the second. But since that, a violent out-cry has been made against the book, exactly answering the expectation I always had of the justice, the wisdom, the charity, and fair-dealing of those whose good-will I despaired of. It has been presented to the grand-jury, and condemned by thousands who never saw a word of it. It has been preached against before my Lord Mayor; and an utter refutation of it is daily expected from a reverend Divine, who has called me names in the advertisements, and threatened to answer me in two months time for above five months together. What I have to say for myself, the reader will see in my vindication at the end of the book, where he will likewise find the grand-jury's presentment, and a letter to the Right Honourable Lord C. which is very rhetorical beyond argument or connection. The author shews a fine talent for invectives, and a great sagacity in discovering atheism, where others can find none. He is zealous against wicked books, points at the Fable of the Bees, and is very angry with the author: he bestows four strong epithets on the enormity of his guilt, and by several elegant innuendos to the multitude, as the danger there is in suffering such authors to live, and the vengeance of Heaven upon a whole nation, very charitably recommends him to their care.

Considering the length of this epistle, and that it is not wholly levelled at me only, I thought at first to have made some extracts from it of what related to my self; but finding, on a nearer enquiry, that what concerned me was so blended and interwoven with what

did not, I was obliged to trouble the reader with it entire, not without hopes that, prolix as it is, the extravagancy of it will be entertaining to those who have perused the treatise it condemns with so much horror.

(1714)

The Grumbling Hive

Or Knaves Turn'd Honest

A spacious hive, well stockt with bees,
That liv'd in luxury and ease;
And yet as fam'd for laws and arms,
As yielding large and early swarms;
Was counted the great nursery
Of sciences and industry.
No bees had better government,
More fickleness, or less content:
They were not slaves to tyranny,
Nor rul'd by wild Democracy;
But kings, that could not wrong, because
Their power was circumscrib'd by laws.
 These insects liv'd like men, and all
Our actions they perform'd in small:
They did whatever's done in town,
And what belongs to sword or gown:
Though th' artful works, by nimble slight
Of minute limbs, 'scap'd human sight;
Yet we've no engines, labourers,
Ships, castles, arms, artificers,
Craft, science, shop, or instrument,
But they had an equivalent:
Which, since their language is unknown,
Must be call'd, as we do our own.
As grant, that among other things,
They wanted dice, yet they had kings;
And those had guards; from whence we may
Justly conclude, they had some play;
Unless a regiment be shown
Of soldiers, that make use of none.

Vast numbers throng'd the fruitful hive;
Yet those vast numbers made 'em thrive;
Millions endeavouring to supply
Each other's lust and vanity;
While other millions were employ'd
To see their handy-works destroy'd;
They furnish'd half the universe;
Yet had more work than labourers.
Some with vast stocks, and little pains,
Jump'd into business of great gains;
And some were damn'd to scythes and spades,
And all those hard laborious trades;
Where willing wretches daily sweat,
And wear out strength and limbs, to eat:
While others follow'd mysteries,
To which few folks bind 'prentices;
That want no stock, but that of brass,
And may set up without a cross;[1]
As sharpers, parasites, pimps, players,
Pick-pockets, coiners, quacks, sooth-sayers,
And all those that, in enmity,
With downright working, cunningly
Convert to their own use the labour
Of their good-natur'd heedless neighbour.
These were called knaves, but bar the name,
The grave industrious were the same:
All trades and places knew some cheat,
No calling was without deceit.
The lawyers, of whose art the basis
Was raising feuds and splitting cases,
Oppos'd all registers, that cheats
Might make more work with dipt estates;[2]
As wer't unlawful, that one's own,
Without a law-suit, should be known.
They kept off hearings wilfully,
To finger the refreshing fee;
And to defend a wicked cause,
Examin'd and survey'd the laws,
As burglars shops and houses do,
To find out where they'd best break through.

[1] a small coin. [2] mortgaged estates.

Physicians valu'd fame and wealth
Above the drooping patient's health,
Or their own skill: the greatest part
Study'd, instead of rules of art,
Grave pensive looks and dull behaviour,
To gain th' apothecary's favour;
The praise of midwives, priests, and all
That serv'd at birth or funeral.
To bear with th' ever-talking tribe,
And hear my lady's aunt prescribe;
With formal smile, and kind How d'ye,
To fawn on all the family;
And, which of all the greatest curse is,
T' endure th' impertinence of nurses.
Among the many priests of Jove,
Hir'd to draw blessings from above,
Some few were learn'd and eloquent,
But thousands hot and ignorant:
Yet all pass'd muster that could hide
Their sloth, lust, avarice and pride;
For which they were as fam'd as tailors
For cabbage, or for brandy sailors:
Some, meagre-look'd, and meanly clad,
Would mystically pray for bread,
Meaning by that an ample store,
Yet lit'rally received no more;
And, while these holy drudges starv'd,
The lazy ones, for which they serv'd,
Indulg'd their ease, with all the graces
Of health and plenty in their faces.
The soldiers, that were forc'd to fight,
If they surviv'd, got honour by't;
Though some, that shunn'd the bloody fray,
Had limbs shot off, that ran away:
Some valiant gen'rals fought the foe;
Others took bribes to let them go:
Some ventur'd always where 'twas warm,
Lost now a leg, and then an arm;
Till quite disabled, and put by,
They liv'd on half their salary;
While others never came in play,

And staid at home for double pay.
 Their kings were serv'd, but knavishly,
Cheated by their own ministry;
Many, that for their welfare slaved,
Robbing the very crown they saved:
Pensions were small, and they liv'd high,
Yet boasted of their honesty.
Calling, whene'er they strain'd their right,
The slipp'ry trick a perquisite;
And when folks understood their cant,
They chang'd that for emolument;
Unwilling to be short or plain,
In any thing concerning gain;
For there was not a bee but would
Get more, I won't say, than he should;
But than he dar'd to let them know,
They paid for't; as your gamesters do,
That, though at fair play, ne'er will own
Before the losers what they've won.
 But who can all their frauds repeat?
The very stuff, which in the street
They sold for dirt t'enrich the ground,
Was often by the buyers found
Sophisticated with a quarter
Of good-for-nothing stones and mortar;
Though Flail had little cause to mutter,
Who sold the other salt for butter.
 Justice herself, fam'd for fair dealing,
By blindness had not lost her feeling;
Her left hand, which the scales should hold,
Had often dropt 'em, brib'd with gold;
And, though she seemed impartial,
Where punishment was corporal,
Pretended to a reg'lar course,
In murther, and all crimes of force;
Though some, first pilloried for cheating,
Were hang'd in hemp of their own beating;
Yet, it was thought, the sword she bore
Check'd but the desp'rate and the poor;
That, urg'd by mere necessity,
Were ty'd up to the wretched tree

For crimes, which not deserv'd that fate,
But to secure the rich and great.
 Thus every part was full of vice,
Yet the whole mass a paradise;
Flatter'd in peace, and fear'd in wars,
They were th' esteem of foreigners,
And lavish of their wealth and lives,
The balance of all other hives.
Such were the blessings of that state;
Their crimes conspir'd to make them great.
And Virtue, who from politics
Had learn'd a thousand cunning tricks,
Was, by their happy influence,
Made friends with vice: and ever since,
The worst of all the multitude
Did something for the common good.
 This was the state's craft, that maintain'd
The whole of which each part complain'd:
This, as in music harmony,
Made jarrings in the main agree;
Parties directly opposite,
Assist each other, as 'twere for spite;
And temp'rance with sobriety,
Serve drunkenness and gluttony.
 The root of evil, avarice,
That damn'd, ill-natur'd, baneful vice,
Was slave to prodigality,
That noble sin; whilst luxury
Employ'd a million of the poor,
And odious pride a million more:
Envy itself, and vanity,
Were ministers of industry;
Their darling folly, fickleness,
In diet, furniture and dress,
That strange, ridic'lous vice, was made
The very wheel that turn'd the trade.
Their laws and clothes were equally
Objects of mutability;
For what was well done for a time,
In half a year became a crime;
Yet while they alter'd thus their laws,

Still finding and correcting flaws,
They mended by inconstancy
Faults, which no prudence could foresee.
 Thus vice nurs'd ingenuity,
Which join'd with time and industry,
Had carry'd life's conveniencies,
Its real pleasures, comforts, ease,
To such a height, the very poor
Liv'd better than the rich before,
And nothing could be added more.
 How vain is mortal happiness!
Had they but known the bounds of bliss;
And that perfection here below
Is more than gods can well bestow;
The grumbling brutes had been content
With ministers and government.
But they, at every ill success,
Like creatures lost without redress,
Curs'd politicians, armies, fleets;
While every one cry'd, "Damn the cheats!"
And would, though conscious of his own,
In others barb'rously bear none.
 One, that had got a princely store,
By cheating master, king and poor,
Dar'd cry aloud, "The land must sink
For all its fraud"; and whom d'ye think
The sermonizing rascal chid?
A glover that sold lamb for kid.
 The least thing was not done amiss,
Or cross'd the public business;
But all the rogues cried brazenly,
"Good Gods, had we but honesty!"
Merc'ry smil'd at th' impudence,
And others call'd it want of sense,
Always to rail at what they lov'd:
But Jove with indignation mov'd,
At last in anger swore he'd rid
The bawling hive of fraud; and did.
The very moment it departs,
And honesty fills all their hearts;
There shews 'em, like th' instructive tree,

Those crimes which they're asham'd to see;
Which now in silence they confess,
By blushing at their ugliness:
Like children, that would hide their faults,
And by their colour own their thoughts:
Imag'ning when they're look'd upon,
That others see what they have done.

But, O ye Gods! what consternation,
How vast and sudden was th' alteration!
In half an hour, the nation round,
Meat fell a penny in the pound.
The mask hypocrisy's flung down,
From the great statesman to the clown:
And some in borrow'd looks well known,
Appear'd like strangers in their own.
The bar was silent from that day;
For now the willing debtors pay,
Ev'n what's by creditors forgot;
Who quitted them that had it not.
Those, that were in the wrong, stood mute,
And dropt the patch'd vexatious suit:
On which since nothing less can thrive,
Than lawyers in an honest hive,
All, except those that got enough,
With inkhorns by their sides troop'd off.
Justice hang'd some, set others free;
And after jail delivery,
Her presence being no more requir'd,
With all her train and pomp retir'd.
First march'd some smiths with locks and grates,
Fetters, and doors with iron plates:
Next jailors, turnkeys and assistants:
Before the goddess, at some distance,
Her chief and faithful minister,
'Squire Catch,[1] the law's great finisher,
Bore not th' imaginary sword,
But his own tools, an axe and cord:
Then on a cloud the hood-wink'd fair,
Justice herself was push'd by air:

[1] Jack Ketch had become a generic name for executioners.—*Kaye.*

Above her chariot, and behind,
Were serjeants, bums[1] of every kind,
Tip-staffs, and all those officers,
That squeeze a living out of tears.
Though physic liv'd, while folks were ill,
None would prescribe, but bees of skill,
Which through the hive dispers'd so wide,
That none of them had need to ride;
Waiv'd vain disputes, and strove to free
The patients of their misery;
Left drugs in cheating countries grown,
And us'd the product of their own;
Knowing the gods sent no disease
To nations without remedies.
Their clergy rous'd from laziness,
Laid not their charge on journey-bees;[2]
But serv'd themselves, exempt from vice,
The gods with pray'r and sacrifice;
All those, that were unfit, or knew
Their service might be spar'd, withdrew:
Nor was there business for so many,
(If th' honest stand in need of any,)
Few only with the high-priest stay'd,
To whom the rest obedience paid:
Himself employ'd in holy cares,
Resign'd to others state-affairs.
He chas'd no starv'ling from his door,
Nor pinch'd the wages of the poor;
But at his house the hungry's fed,
The hireling finds unmeasur'd bread,
The needy trav'ller board and bed.
Among the king's great ministers,
And all th' inferior officers
The change was great; for frugally
They now liv'd on their salary:
That a poor bee should ten times come
To ask his due, a trifling sum,
And by some well-hir'd clerk be made
To give a crown, or ne'er be paid,

[1] bum-bailiffs.
[2] "Journeyman parson" was a slang term for a curate.—*Kaye.*

Would now be call'd a downright cheat,
Though formerly a perquisite.
All places manag'd first by three,
Who watch'd each other's knavery,
And often for a fellow-feeling,
Promoted one another's stealing,
Are happily supply'd by one,
By which some thousands more are gone.
No honour now could be content,
To live and owe for what was spent;
Liv'ries in brokers' shops are hung,
They part with coaches for a song;
Sell stately horses by whole sets;
And country-houses, to pay debts.
Vain cost is shunn'd as much as fraud;
They have no forces kept abroad;
Laugh at th' esteem of foreigners,
And empty glory got by wars;
They fight, but for their country's sake,
When right or liberty's at stake.
Now mind the glorious hive, and see
How honesty and trade agree.
The show is gone, it thins apace;
And looks with quite another face.
For 'twas not only that they went,
By whom vast sums were yearly spent;
But multitudes that liv'd on them,
Were daily forc'd to do the same.
In vain to other trades they'd fly;
All were o'er-stock'd accordingly.
The price of land and houses falls;
Mirac'lous palaces, whose walls,
Like those of Thebes, were rais'd by play,[1]
Are to be let; while the once gay,
Well-seated household gods would be
More pleas'd to expire in flames, than see
The mean inscription on the door
Smile at the lofty ones they bore.

[1] The legend was that in the building of Thebes, when Amphion played his lyre the stones moved of their own accord and formed the wall. Kaye suggests that there may be a pun on the word "play," the word meaning both music and gambling.

The building trade is quite destroy'd,
Artificers are not employ'd;
No limner for his art is fam'd,
Stone-cutters, carvers are not nam'd.
 Those, that remain'd, grown temp'rate, strive,
Not how to spend, but how to live,
And, when they paid their tavern score,
Resolv'd to enter it no more:
No vintner's jilt in all the hive
Could wear now cloth of gold, and thrive;
Nor Torcol such vast sums advance,
For Burgundy and Ortelans;
The courtier's gone, that with his miss
Supp'd at his house on Christmas peas;
Spending as much in two hours stay,
As keeps a troop of horse a day.
 The haughty Chloe, to live great,
Had made her husband rob the state:
But now she sells her furniture,
Which th' Indies had been ransack'd for;
Contracts th' expensive bill of fare,
And wears her strong suit a whole year:
The slight and fickle age is past;
And clothes, as well as fashions, last.
Weavers, that join'd rich silk with plate,
And all the trades subordinate,
Are gone. Still peace and plenty reign,
And every thing is cheap, though plain:
Kind nature, free from gard'ner's force,
Allows all fruits in her own course;
But rarities cannot be had,
Where pains to get them are not paid.
 As pride and luxury decrease,
So by degrees they leave the seas.
Not merchants now, but companies
Remove whole manufactories.
All arts and crafts neglected lie;
Content, the bane of industry,
Makes 'em admire their homely store,
And neither seek nor covet more.
 So few in the vast hive remain,

The hundredth part they can't maintain
Against th' insults of numerous foes;
Whom yet they valiantly oppose:
Till some well-fenc'd retreat is found,
And here they die or stand their ground.
No hireling in their army's known;
But bravely fighting for their own,
Their courage and integrity
At last were crown'd with victory.
They triumph'd not without their cost,
For many thousand bees were lost.
Hard'ned with toil and exercise,
They counted ease itself a vice;
Which so improv'd their temperance;
That, to avoid extravagance,
They flew into a hollow tree,
Blest with content and honesty.

THE MORAL

Then leave complaints: fools only strive
To make a great an honest hive.
T' enjoy the world's conveniences,
Be fam'd in war, yet live in ease,
Without great vices, is a vain
Utopia seated in the brain.
Fraud, Luxury and Pride must live,
While we the benefits receive:
Hunger's a dreadful plague, no doubt,
Yet who digests or thrives without?
Do we not owe the growth of wine
To the dry shabby crooked vine?
Which, while its shoots neglected stood,
Chok'd other plants, and ran to wood;
But blest us with its noble fruit,
As soon as it was ty'd and cut:
So vice is beneficial found,
When it's by justice lopt and bound;
Nay, where the people would be great,
As necessary to the state,
As hunger is to make 'em eat.

Bare virtue can't make nations live
In splendor; they, that would revive
A golden age, must be as free,
For acorns, as for honesty.

(1705)

Isaac Watts

1674–1748

ISAAC WATTS, the son of a clothier and the grandson of a commander of a man-of-war, was born in Southampton, July 17, 1674. Isaac came honestly by his dissenting beliefs, for his father had been put in jail as a dissenter. The boy went first to a grammar school in Southampton, and later (1690), to an academy at Stoke Newington, under a dissenting clergyman. He preferred, as he said, to "take his lot among the dissenters" rather than accept an offer of a university education. In 1694, he left the academy and stayed at home for a year and a half. It was at this time that he wrote his first hymns. In 1696, he became tutor to the son of Sir John Hartopp at Stoke Newington and continued as such for five years. His leisure time he spent in the study of Hebrew and divinity, and became so well qualified that in 1698 he preached his first sermon. The next year he was appointed assistant pastor, and in 1702 he became pastor of the chapel at Mark Lane, Stoke Newington. His "Horae Lyricae," a book of religious poetry, took the world of dissent by storm in 1706 and started on its long, successful course as a book of hymns. The year following, he brought out a volume called "Hymns," which met with similar success. In 1712, he became the permanent guest of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney at their two estates, at Theobalds and Stoke Newington. His children's hymnbook, called "Divine Songs," came out in 1715 and was later enlarged and renamed "Divine and Moral Songs." In 1719, he published his "Psalms of David," and two years later his "Sermons," with hymns attached. Edinburgh University conferred upon him the degree of D.D. in 1728. He died on November 25, 1748, and was buried in Bunhill Fields, London, the "Campo Santo of the Dissenters." A monument to his memory was later erected in Westminister Abbey.

EDITION

Divine and Moral Songs of Isaac Watts. Edited by W. M. Stone. University Press of Sewanee. (Privately printed.) 1918.

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Wright, Thomas: "Isaac Watts and Contemporary Hymn-Writers." 1914.

Palmer, F.: "Isaac Watts," in *The Harvard Theological Review*, XII (1919), pp. 371ff.

The Day of Judgment

WHEN the fierce north wind with his airy forces
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury,
And the red lightning with a storm of hail comes
Rushing amain down,

How the poor sailors stand amaz'd and tremble:
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,
Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters,
Quick to devour them.

Such shall the noise be and the wild disorder,
(If things eternal may be like these earthly)
Such the dire terror, when the great Archangel
Shakes the creation,

Tears the strong pillars of the vault of heav'n,
Breaks up old marble, the repose of princes,
See the graves open, and the bones arising,
Flames all around 'em!

Hark, the shrill outcries of the guilty wretches!
Lively bright horror and amazing anguish
Stare through their eyelids, while the living worm lies
Gnawing within them.

Thoughts like old vultures prey upon their heart-strings,
And the smart twinges, when the eye beholds the
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance
Rolling afore him.

Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver,
While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning
Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong
Down to the centre.

Stop here, my fancy: (all away ye horrid
Doleful ideas) come, arise to Jesus;
How He sits God-like! and the saints around him
Thron'd, yet adoring!

O may I sit there when he comes triumphant
Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory
While our hosannas all along the passage
Shout the Redeemer.

(1706)

True Riches

I AM not concern'd to know
What to-morrow Fate will do:
'Tis enough that I can say
I've possest myself today:
Then if haply Midnight Death
Seize my flesh and stop my breath,
Yet to-morrow I shall be
Heir to the best part of me.
Glitt'ring stones and golden things,
Wealth and honours, that have wings,
Ever flutt'ring to be gone,
I could never call my own:
Riches that the world bestows
She can take and I can lose,
But the treasures that are mine
Lie afar beyond her line.
When I view my spacious soul,
And survey myself a-whole,
And enjoy myself alone,
I'm a kingdom of my own.
I've a mighty part within
That the world hath never seen,
Rich as Eden's happy ground,
And with choicer plenty crown'd.
Here on all the shining boughs
Knowledge fair and useful grows;
On the same young flow'ry tree

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And with choicer plenty crown'd.
Here on all the shining boughs
Knowledge fair and useful grows;
On the same young flow'ry tree

All the seasons you may see;
Notions in the bloom of light,
Just disclosing to the sight:
Here are thoughts of larger growth
Rip'ning into solid truth;
Fruits refin'd, of noble taste,
Seraphs feed on such repast:
Here in a green and shady grove
Streams of pleasure mix with love:
There beneath the smiling skies
Hills of contemplation rise;
Now upon some shining top
Angels light and call me up;
I rejoice to raise my feet,
Both rejoice when there we meet.
 There are endless beauties more
Earth hath no resemblance for;
Nothing like them round the pole,
Nothing can describe the soul:
'Tis a region half unknown
That has treasures of its own
More remote from public view
Than the bowels of Peru;
Broader 'tis and brighter far
Than the golden Indies are;
Ships that trace the wat'ry stage
Cannot coast it in an age;
Harts or horses, strong and fleet,
Had they wings to help their feet,
Could not run it half way o'er
In ten thousand days and more.
 Yet the silly wand'ring mind,
Loath to be too much confin'd,
Roves and takes her daily tours
Coasting round the narrow shores,
Narrow shores of flesh and sense,
Picking shells and pebbles thence;
Or she sits at fancy's door
Calling shapes and shadows t' her,
Foreign visits still receiving,
And t' herself a stranger living:

Never never would she buy
Indian dust or Tyrian dye,
Never trade abroad for more,
If she saw her native store;
If her inward worth were known
She might ever live alone.

(1709)

Ambrose Philips

1675(?)–1749

AMBROSE PHILIPS was born, in or near 1675, in Shropshire, and is said to have descended from an old Leicestershire family; but as he was entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar, and as his father was at that time characterized as "panni-cularius" (that is, "in rags"), it would seem that the family had fallen in the world. Ambrose took his B.A. in 1696 and his M.A. in 1700. He was a fellow of St. John's from 1699 until March 24, 1708. One of his poems is dated from Utrecht in 1703; apparently, he was employed on some mission in the north, for he addressed from Copenhagen, on March 9, 1709, his "Epistle to the Earl of Dorset," which Steele published in *The Tatler* (No. 12). In the same year, some of his pastorals, written while he was in college, were published in Tonson's *Miscellany*. He also translated the "Contes persans" of Petit De la Croix, which provoked Pope to accuse him of "turning a Persian Tale for half a crown." Johnson remarked that, as the book was divided into many sections, the rate was very liberal in view of the payments then made to writers. In 1710 he published his pastorals and other poems separately. He was now on friendly terms with Swift, who promised to solicit for him the post of Queen's Secretary at Geneva, but since Philips about this time became one of Addison's Whig party, Swift lost interest in him. In 1713, a flattering notice of Philips's pastorals in *The Guardian* led Pope to write an ironical eulogy of them, to the apparent disparagement of his own. When Philips discovered the irony, he hung up a birch rod at Button's; but Pope stayed away. In 1718, Philips started *The Freethinker*, which was later published in three volumes. Appointed secretary to the Bishop of Armagh in 1724, he represented the county of Armagh in the Irish Parliament. In 1726 he became secretary to the Lord Chancellor, and in 1733 judge of the prerogative court. He bought an annuity of £400, and returned to London in 1748. He then published his poems with a dedication to the Duke of Newcastle. The next year, on June 18, he died in London.

EDITIONS

Anderson: "British Poets," Vol. IX. 1795.
Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. XIII. 1810.

Pastorals, Epistles, Odes, and Other Original Poems. By Ambrose Philips. London. 1748.

Epistle to the Earl of Dorset

FROM frozen climes, and endless tracks of snow,
From streams which northern winds forbid to flow,
What present shall the Muse to Dorset bring,
Or how, so near the pole, attempt to sing?
The hoary winter here conceals from sight
All pleasing objects which to verse invite.
The hills and dales, and the delightful woods,
The flow'ry plains, and silver-streaming floods,
By snow disguis'd, in bright confusion lie,
And with one dazzling waste fatigue the eye.
 No gentle breathing breeze prepares the spring,
No birds within the desert region sing.
The ships, unmov'd, the boist'rous winds defy,
While rattling chariots o'er the ocean fly.
The vast Leviathan wants room to play,
And spout his waters in the face of day.
The starving wolves along the main sea prowl,
And to the moon in icy valleys howl.
O'er many a shining league the level main
Here spreads itself into a glassy plain:
There solid billows of enormous size,
Alps of green ice, in wild disorder rise.
 And yet but lately have I seen, ev'n here,
The winter in a lovely dress appear.
Ere yet the clouds let fall the treasur'd snow,
Or winds begun through hazy skies to blow,
At evening a keen eastern breeze arose,
And the descending rain unsully'd froze.
Soon as the silent shades of night withdrew,
The ruddy morn disclos'd at once to view
The face of nature in a rich disguise,
And brighten'd ev'ry object to my eyes:
For ev'ry shrub, and ev'ry blade of grass,
And ev'ry pointed thorn, seem'd wrought in glass;
In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns show,
While through the ice the crimson berries glow.

The thick-sprung reeds which watry marshes yield,
Seem'd polish'd lances in a hostile field.
The stag in limpid currents, with surprise,
Sees crystal branches on his forehead rise:
The spreading oak, the beech, and tow'ring pine,
Glaz'd over, in the freezing æther shine.
The frighted birds the rattling branches shun,
That wave and glitter in the distant sun.
When if a sudden gust of wind arise,
The brittle forest into atoms flies,
The crackling wood beneath the tempest bends,
And in a spangled show'r the prospect ends:
Or, if a southern gale the region warm,
And by degrees unbind the wintry charm,
The traveller a miry country sees,
And journeys sad beneath the dropping trees:
Like some deluded peasant, Merlin leads
Through fragrant bow'rs, and through delicious meads;
While here enchanted gardens to him rise,
And airy fabrics there attract his eyes,
His wandering feet the magic paths pursue;
And while he thinks the fair illusion true,
The trackless scenes disperse in fluid air,
And woods, and wilds, and thorny ways appear:
A tedious road the weary wretch returns,
And, as he goes, the transient vision mourns.

(1709)

To Miss Charlotte Pulteney In Her Mother's Arms; May 1, 1724

Timely blossom, infant fair,
Fondling of a happy pair,
Every morn, and every night,
Their solicitous delight,
Sleeping, waking, still at ease,
Pleasing, without skill to please,
Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,

Lavish of a heedless tongue,
Simple maiden, void of art,
Babbling out the very heart,
Yet abandon'd to thy will,
Yet imagining no ill,
Yet too innocent to blush,
Like the linnet in the bush,
To the mother-linnet's note
Moduling[1] her slender throat,
Chirping forth thy pretty joys,
Wanton in the change of toys,
Like the linnet green, in May,
Flitting to each bloomy spray,
Wearied then, and glad of rest,
Like the linnet in the nest.
This thy present happy lot,
This, in time, will be forgot:
Other pleasures, other cares,
Ever-busy Time prepares;
And thou shalt in thy daughter see
This picture, once, resembled thee.

(1724)

[1] modeling.

Jonathan Swift

1667–1745

JONATHAN SWIFT, the posthumous son of an impecunious father of English birth, was born in Dublin on November 30, 1667. He attended Kilkenny School from his sixth to his fourteenth year, and then, in 1682, entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a pensioner. He graduated *speciali gratia*, or, as Swift himself said, "little to his credit," in February, 1686. He remained in residence, with no settled occupation, for three more years. Towards the close of 1689, he entered the service of Sir William Temple at Moor Park, in Surrey, as something less than a secretary; but being thoroughly unhappy there, he returned to Ireland in the hope of getting a fellowship at Trinity. Failing in that, he ended a restless year by returning to Temple around Christmas, 1690. His sole happiness in Moor Park was in the society of Esther Johnson ("Stella"), the daughter of the widow of a former steward of the household, then a girl of only eight years. The award of a Master's degree from Oxford, after a brief residence there, gratified him, and the growing respect Temple showed him made his stay there more tolerable. He returned to Ireland in May, 1684, was ordained deacon at once and priest in the following January, and was appointed prebendary of Kilroot, near Belfast. He resigned this office after a year of desolation, and was back in Moor Park in 1696, where he remained till the death of Temple, in 1699. In 1700 he entered upon the parish of Laracor, seventeen miles from Dublin, and was made prebendary of St. Patrick's. Stella, with her constant friend and companion, Rebecca Dingley, was persuaded by Swift to settle near him in Laracor or in Dublin, but the three never lived together under the same roof. In 1701, he made a visit to England and wrote a pamphlet in behalf of the Whigs, "Dissentions of Greece and Rome." On one of his rather frequent visits to London, he took with him his "A Tale of a Tub" and "The Battle of the Books," both written during his last years with Temple. He wrote other pamphlets in defense of the Church, and at last, in 1710, he broke with the Whigs, whom he blamed for their neglect of the Church.

Swift now became the chief supporter of the Tories and was one of the most important unofficial persons in London. However, since the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Queen stood in the way of his

advancement to a bishopric, his highest promotion was to the deanship of St. Patrick's, in 1713. With Arbuthnot, Gay, Parnell, and Pope, he then formed the Scriblerus Club, out of which came "The Dunciad" and "Gulliver's Travels." A friendship with Hester Vanhomrigh ("Vanessa"), which had begun in 1708, developed on her part into a violent and unabashed passion, which, with cruel kindness, he did not check. She followed him to Ireland in 1714 and continued her devotion until the year before her death, in 1723. In 1720, he became the champion of Irish rights against the English, and in his "Universal Use of Irish Manufactures" (1720), "Drapier's Letters" (1723–1724), and "A Modest Proposal" (1729), he made himself feared by the English and loved by the Irish. In 1726 he made another visit to England, and brought out "Gulliver's Travels." In January, 1728, the death of Stella left him desolate. Dublin gave him the freedom of the city in 1730 as a mark of the affection of the Irish, for the fearless defender of their rights; but such tributes meant little to a man who wrote "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift" (1731). His growing infirmities developed into intense physical suffering, so that by 1740 "his deafness was almost complete, his giddiness unceasing" (Van Doren). The last three years of his life were sunk in the apathy of paralysis. He died on October 19, 1745.

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The Poetical Works of Jonathan Swift. Edited, with a Memoir, by the Rev. John Mitford. 3 vols. 1895.

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A Description of the Morning

WRITTEN IN APRIL 1709, AND FIRST PRINTED IN "THE TATLER"

Now hardly here and there an hackney-coach
Appearing, show'd the ruddy morn's approach.
Now Betty from her master's bed had flown,
And softly stole to discompose her own;
The slip-shod 'prentice from his master's door
Had par'd the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.
Now Moll had whirl'd her mop with dext'rous airs,
Prepar'd to scrub the entry and the stairs.
The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
The kennel's edge,[1] where wheels had worn the place.
The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep:
Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet;
And brickdust Moll had scream'd through half the street.
The turnkey now his flock returning sees,
Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

(1709)

A Description of a City Shower

(*In Imitation of Virgil's Georgics*)

WRITTEN IN OCTOBER, 1710, AND FIRST PRINTED IN "THE TATLER," NO. 238

CAREFUL observers may foretell the hour
(By sure prognostics) when to dread a show'r.
While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.
Returning home at night, you'll find the sink
Strike your offended sense with double stink.
If you be wise, then go not far to dine;
You'll spend in coach-hire more than save in wine.

[1] The edge of the gutter. According to Faulkner, quoted by Mitford, the youth is searching for old nails.

A coming show'r your shooting corns presage,
Old a-ches throb, your hollow tooth will rage:
Saunt'ring in coffeehouse is Dulman seen;
He damns the climate, and complains of spleen.
Meanwhile the South, rising with dabbled wings,
A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,
That swill'd more liquor than it could contain,
And, like a drunkard, gives it up again.
Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
While the first drizzling show'r is borne aslope:
Such is that sprinkling, which some careless quean
Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean:
You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop.
Not yet the dust had shunn'd th' unequal strife,
But, aided by the wind, fought still for life,
And wafted with its foe by vi'lent gust,
'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.[1]
Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
Sole[2] coat, where dust cemented by the rain
Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain.
Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
Threat'ning with deluge this *devoted* town.
To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.
The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroach,
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.
The tuck'd-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
While streams run down her oil'd umbrella's sides.
Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.
Triumphant Tories, and desponding Whigs,[3]
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.
Box'd in a chair the beau impatient sits,

[1] "'Twas doubtful which was sea and which was sky."—Garth's "Dispensary."

[2] Originally thus, but altered when Pope published the "Miscellanies":

His only coat, where dust confused with rain,
Roughens the nap, and leaves a mingled stain.—*Scott.*

[3] Because they were out of power in that year.

While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits,
And ever and anon with frightful din
The leather sounds; he trembles from within.
So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,
Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed,
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,
Instead of paying chairmen, ran them through,)
Laocoon struck the outside with his spear,
And each imprison'd hero quak'd for fear.
Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them as they go:
Filth of all hues and odour seem to tell
What street they sail'd from, by their sight and smell.
They, as each torrent drives with rapid force,
From Smithfield to St. Pulchre's shape their course,
And in huge confluence join'd at Snowhill ridge,
Fall from the conduit prone to Holborn bridge.
Sweeping from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
Drown'd puppies, stinking sprats, all drench'd in mud,
Dead cats, and turnip-tops, come tumbling down the flood.

(1710)

Wood an Insect

By long observation I have understood,
That two little vermin are kin to Will Wood.[1]
The first is an insect they call a wood-louse,
That folds up itself in itself for a house,
As round as a ball, without head, without tail,
Enclos'd *cap à pié*, in a strong coat of mail.
And thus William Wood to my fancy appears
In fillets of brass roll'd up to his ears;
And over these fillets he wisely has thrown,
To keep out of danger, a doublet of stone.[2]
The louse of the wood for a medicine is us'd
Or swallow'd alive, or skilfully bruis'd.
And, let but our mother Hibernia contrive

[1] William Wood had the patent for coining half-pence for Ireland, a project which Swift bitterly opposed in his "Drapier's Letters."
[2] a prison, since Wood was at that time in jail for debt.

To swallow Will Wood, either bruis'd or alive,
She need be no more with the jaundice possest,
Or sick of obstructions, and pains in her chest.
The next is an insect we call a wood-worm,
That lies in old wood like a hare in her form;
With teeth or with claws it will bite or will scratch,
And chambermaids christen this worm a death-watch;
Because like a watch it always cries click;
Then woe be to those in the house who are sick:
For, as sure as a gun, they will give up the ghost,
If the maggot cries click when it scratches the post;
But a kettle of scalding hot water injected
Infallibly cures the timber affected;
The omen is broken, the danger is over;
The maggot will die, and the sick will recover.
Such a worm was Will Wood, when he scratch'd at the door
Of a governing statesman or favourite whore;[1]
The death of our nation he seem'd to foretell,
And the sound of his brass we took for our knell,
But now, since the Drapier has heartily maul'd him,
I think the best thing we can do is to scald him;
For which operation there's nothing more proper
Than the liquor he deals in, his own melted copper;
Unless, like the Dutch, you rather would boil
This coiner of raps[2] in a caldron of oil.
Then choose which you please, and let each bring a faggot,
For our fear's at an end with the death of the maggot.

(1725)

Stella's[3] *Birthday, March 13, 1726–7*

This day, whate'er the Fates decree,
Shall still be kept with joy by me:
This day then let us not be told,
That you are sick, and I grown old;

[1] the Duchess of Kendal, the mistress of George I.
[2] counterfeit half-pence current in Ireland.
[3] Esther Johnson (1681–1728), whom Swift had known and loved since his early days at Moor Park with Sir William Temple. She was the daughter of a confidential servant of Temple. When this poem was written, Stella was living with Mrs. Dingley, her constant companion, in Dublin.

Nor think on our approaching ills,
And talk of spectacles and pills:
To-morrow will be time enough
To hear such mortifying stuff.
Yet, since from reason may be brought
A better and more pleasing thought,
Which can in spite of all decays,
Support a few remaining days;
From not the gravest of divines
Accept for once some serious lines.
 Although we now can form no more
Long schemes of life, as heretofore;
Yet you, while time is running fast,
Can look with joy on what is past.
 Were future happiness and pain
A mere contrivance of the brain;
As atheists argue, to entice
And fit their proselytes for vice;
(The only comfort they propose,
To have companions in their woes:)
Grant this the case; yet sure 'tis hard
That virtue, styl'd its own reward,
And by all sages understood
To be the chief of human good,
Should acting die; nor leave behind
Some lasting pleasure in the mind,
Which by remembrance will assuage
Grief, sickness, poverty, and age;
And strongly shoot a radiant dart
To shine thro' life's declining part.
 Say, Stella, feel you no content,
Reflecting on a life well spent?
Your skilful hand employ'd to save
Despairing wretches from the grave;
And then supporting with your store
Those whom you dragg'd from death before?
So Providence on mortals waits,
Preserving what it first creates:
Your gen'rous boldness to defend
An innocent and absent friend;
That courage, which can make you just

To merit humbled in the dust;
The detestation you express
For vice in all its glitt'ring dress;
That patience under tort'ring pain,
Where stubborn stoics would complain:
Must these like empty shadows pass,
Or forms reflected from a glass?
Or mere chimæras in the mind,
That fly, and leave no marks behind?
Does not the body thrive and grow
By food of twenty years ago?
And, had it not been still supply'd,
It must a thousand times have dy'd.
Then who with reason can maintain
That no effects of food remain?
And is not virtue in mankind
The nutriment that feeds the mind;
Upheld by each good action past,
And still continu'd by the last?
Then, who with reason can pretend
That all effects of virtue end?
 Believe me, Stella, when you show
That true contempt for things below,
Nor prize your life for other ends
Than merely to oblige your friends;
Your former actions claim their part,
And join to fortify your heart.
For Virtue in her daily race,
Like Janus, bears a double face;
Looks back with joy where she has gone,
And therefore goes with courage on.
She at your sickly couch will wait,
And guide you to a better state.
 O then, whatever Heav'n intends,
Take pity on your pitying friends!
Nor let your ills affect your mind,
To fancy they can be unkind.
Me, surely me, you ought to spare,
Who gladly would your suff'rings share;
Or give my scrap of life to you,
And think it far beneath your due;

You, to whose care so oft I owe
That I'm alive to tell you so.

(1727)

On the Death of Dr. Swift

WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER, 1731

Occasioned by reading the following maxim in Rochefoucauld: "Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose, qui ne nous déplaît pas."[1]

THE time is not remote, when I
Must by the course of nature die;
When, I foresee, my special friends
Will try to find their private ends:
Tho' it is hardly understood
Which way my death can do them good,
Yet thus, methinks, I hear 'em speak:
"See, how the Dean begins to break!
Poor gentleman, he droops apace!
You plainly find it in his face.
That old vertigo in his head
Will never leave him till he's dead.
Besides, his memory decays:
He recollects not what he says;
He cannot call his friends to mind:
Forgets the place where last he din'd;
Plies you with stories o'er and o'er;
He told them fifty times before.
How does he fancy we can sit
To hear his out-of-fashion'd wit?
But he takes up with younger folks,
Who for his wine will bear his jokes.
Faith! he must make his stories shorter,
Or change his comrades once a quarter:
In half the time he talks them round,
There must another set be found.
"For poetry he's past his prime:

[1] In the adversity of our best friends we always find something that doth not displease us.

He takes an hour to find a rhyme;
His fire is out, his wit decay'd,
His fancy sunk, his Muse a jade.
I'd have him throw away his pen;—
But there's no talking to some men!"
And then their tenderness appears,
By adding largely to my years;
"He's older than he would be reckon'd,
And well remembers Charles the Second.
He hardly drinks a pint of wine;
And that, I doubt, is no good sign.
His stomach too begins to fail:
Last year we thought him strong and hale;
But now he's quite another thing:
I wish he may hold out till spring!"
Then hug themselves, and reason thus:
"It is not yet so bad with us!"
In such a case, they talk in tropes,
And by their fears express their hopes:
Some great misfortune to portend,
No enemy can match a friend.
With all the kindness they profess,
The merit of a lucky guess
(When daily how d'ye's come of course,
And servants answer, "*Worse and worse!*")
Would please 'em better, than to tell,
That, "God be prais'd, the Dean is well."
Then he, who prophecy'd the best,
Approves his foresight to the rest:
"You know I always fear'd the worst,
And often told you so at first."
He'd rather choose that I should die,
Than his prediction prove a lie.
Not one foretells I shall recover;
But all agree to give me over.
Yet, should some neighbour feel a pain
Just in the parts where I complain;
How many a message would he send!
What hearty prayers that I should mend!
Inquire what regimen I kept;
What gave me ease, and how I slept?

And more lament when I was dead,
Than all the sniv'llers round my bed.
My good companions, never fear;
For though you may mistake a year,
Though your prognostics run too fast,
They must be verify'd at last.
Behold the fatal day arrive!
"How is the Dean?"—"He's just alive."
Now the departing prayer is read;
"He hardly breathes."—"The Dean is dead."
Before the Passing-bell begun,
The news thro' half the town has run.
"O! may we all for death prepare!
What has he left? and who's his heir?"—
"I know no more than what the news is;
'Tis all bequeath'd to public uses."—
"To public use! a perfect whim!
What had the public done for him?
Mere envy, avarice, and pride:
He gave it all—but first he died.
And had the Dean, in all the nation,
No worthy friend, no poor relation?
So ready to do strangers good,
Forgetting his own flesh and blood!"
Now, Grub-Street wits are all employ'd;
With elegies the town is cloy'd:
Some paragraph in ev'ry paper
To curse the Dean, or bless the Drapier.[1]
The doctors, tender of their fame,
Wisely on me lay all the blame.
"We must confess, his case was nice;
But he would never take advice.
Had he been ruled, for aught appears,
He might have lived these twenty years;
For, when we open'd him, we found,
That all his vital parts were sound."
From Dublin soon to London spread,
'Tis told at court, "The Dean is dead."

[1] Swift was the author of "Drapier's Letters" in protest against the debasement of the Irish coinage for the benefit of English politicians and court favorites.

Kind Lady Suffolk,[1] in the spleen,
Runs laughing up to tell the queen.
The queen, so gracious, mild, and good,
Cries, "Is he gone! 'tis time he should.
He's dead, you say; why, let him rot:
I'm glad the medals[2] were forgot.
I promised him, I own; but when?
I only was a princess then;
But now, as consort of a king,
You know, 'tis quite a different thing."

Here shift the scene, to represent
How those I love my death lament.
Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay[3]
A week, and Arbuthnot[4] a day.
St. John[5] himself will scarce forbear
To bite his pen, and drop a tear.
The rest will give a shrug, and cry,
"I'm sorry—but we all must die!"
Indifference, clad in Wisdom's guise,
All fortitude of mind supplies:
For how can stony bowels melt
In those who never pity felt!
When *we* are lash'd, *they* kiss the rod,
Resigning to the will of God.
The fools, my juniors by a year,
Are tortur'd with suspense and fear;
Who wisely thought my age a screen,
When death approach'd, to stand between:
The screen removed, their hearts are trembling;
They mourn for me without dissembling.
My female friends, whose tender hearts
Have better learn'd to act their parts,
Receive the news in doleful dumps:
"The Dean is dead: (and what is trumps?)
Then, Lord have mercy on his soul!
(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)[6]

[1] The Countess of Suffolk, Mrs. Howard, George II's mistress, with whom Swift had been on friendly terms.
[2] The Queen promised Swift medals worth £10, but later forgot her promise.
[3] See p. 337. [4] See p. 264. [5] See p. 256.
[6] The winning of all the tricks in certain card games.

Six deans, they say, must bear the pall:
(I wish I knew what king to call.)
Madam, your husband will attend
The funeral of so good a friend."
"No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight;
And he's engaged to-morrow night:
My Lady Club wou'd take it ill,
If he should fail her at quadrille.
He loved the Dean—(I lead a heart,)
But dearest friends, they say, must part.
His time was come: he ran his race;
We hope he's in a better place."
Why do we grieve that friends should die?
No loss more easy to supply.
One year is past; a different scene!
No further mention of the Dean;
Who now, alas! no more is miss'd,
Than if he never did exist.
Where's now this fav'rite of Apollo!
Departed:—and his works must follow:
Must undergo the common fate;
His kind of wit is out of date.
Suppose me dead; and then suppose
A club assembled at the Rose;
Where, from discourse of this and that,
I grow the subject of their chat.
And while they toss my name about,
With favour some, and some without,
One, quite indiff'rent in the cause,
My character impartial draws:
"The Dean, if we believe report,
Was never ill receiv'd at court.
As for his works in verse and prose
I own myself no judge of those;
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em:
But this I know, all people bought 'em.
As with a moral view design'd
To cure the vices of mankind:
And, if he often miss'd his aim,
The world must own it, to their shame,
The praise is his, and theirs the blame."

"Sir, I have heard another story:
He was a most confounded Tory,
And grew, or he is much belied,
Extremely dull, before he died."
"Can we the Drapier then forget?
Is not our nation in his debt?
'Twas he that writ the Drapier's letters!—"
"He should have left them for his betters,
We had a hundred abler men,
Nor need depend upon his pen.—
Say what you will about his reading,
You never can defend his breeding;
Who in his satires running riot,
Could never leave the world in quiet;
Attacking, when he took the whim,
Court, city, camp—all one to him.—"
"But why should he, except he slobber't,
Offend our patriot, great Sir Robert,[1]
Whose counsels aid the sov'reign pow'r
To save the nation every hour?
What scenes of evil he unravels
In satires, libels, lying travels!
Not sparing his own clergy-cloth,
But eats into it, like a moth!"][2]
"His vein, ironically grave,
Exposed the fool, and lash'd the knave.
To steal a hint was never known,
But what he writ was all his own.
"He never thought an honour done him,
Because a duke was proud to own him,
Would rather slip aside and choose
To talk with wits in dirty shoes;
Despised the fools with stars and garters,
So often seen caressing Chartres.[3]
He never courted men in station,

[1] Sir Robert Walpole (1676–1745), First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister at this time.

[2] Lines 315–341 were omitted when Swift revised the piece in 1739.

[3] The Duke of Chartres: "A man infamous for all manner of vices, who acquired an immense fortune by a constant attention to the vices, wants, and follies of mankind. He died in 1731."—Pope's note to "Moral Essays," III, 20.

Nor persons held in admiration;
Of no man's greatness was afraid,
Because he sought for no man's aid.
Though trusted long in great affairs
He gave himself no haughty airs:
Without regarding private ends,
Spent all his credit for his friends;
And only chose the wise and good;
No flatterers; no allies in blood:
But succour'd virtue in distress,
And seldom fail'd of good success;
As numbers in their hearts must own,
Who, but for him, had been unknown.

"Perhaps I may allow the Dean,
Had too much satire in his vein;
And seem'd determined not to starve it,
Because no age could more deserve it.
Yet malice never was his aim;
He lash'd the vice, but spared the name;
No individual could resent,
Where thousands equally were meant;
His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct;
For he abhorr'd that senseless tribe
Who call it humour when they gibe:
He spared a hump, or crooked nose,
Whose owners set not up for beaux.
True genuine dulness moved his pity,
Unless it offer'd to be witty.
Those who their ignorance confest,
He ne'er offended with a jest;
But laugh'd to hear an idiot quote
A verse from Horace learn'd by rote.
"Vice, if it e'er can be abash'd,
Must be or ridiculed or lash'd.
If you resent it, who's to blame?
He neither knew you nor your name.
Should vice expect to 'scape rebuke,
Because its owner is a duke?
"He knew an hundred pleasant stories,

With all the turns of Whigs and Tories:
Was cheerful to his dying day;
And friends would let him have his way.
"He gave the little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad;
And show'd by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.
That kingdom he hath left his debtor,
I wish it soon may have a better."
And, since you dread no farther lashes,
Methinks you may forgive his ashes.

(1731–39)

The Day of Judgment

With a whirl of thought oppress'd,
I sunk from reverie to rest.
An horrid vision seiz'd my head;
I saw the graves give up their dead!
Jove, arm'd with terrors, bursts the skies,
And thunder roars and lightning flies!
Amaz'd, confus'd, its fate unknown,
The world stands trembling at his throne!
While each pale sinner hung his head,
Jove, nodding, shook the heavens, and said:
"Offending race of human kind,
By nature, reason, *learning*, blind;
You who, through frailty, stepp'd aside;
And you, who never fell—*through pride:*
You who in different sects were shamm'd,
And come to see each other damn'd;
(So some folk told you, but they knew
No more of Jove's designs than you;)
—The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more.
—I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools—Go, go, you're *bit.*"

(Publ. 1752)

Alexander Pope

1688–1744

ALEXANDER POPE, the son of a Roman Catholic linen-draper, was born in London on May 21, 1688, the year of the Protestant Revolution. He was sickly and deformed from childhood, and was sheltered by his fond parents from the rough contacts of school life. Since his Catholic faith kept him out of the public schools and the universities, his education was largely home-made. It was not far from the truth that he "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came"; it is recorded that he began an epic at the age of twelve. The first period of his poetic work extends from 1709, when he published his "Pastorals," to 1714, when he brought out the second edition of "The Rape of the Lock." In 1711 he published his "Essay on Criticism," an exceedingly clever if not a very profound poem on an unpoetical subject. It was in the next year that he still more astonished the London public with his first version of "The Rape of the Lock," in which his satirical genius ran away with his desire to make peace between two estranged Roman Catholic families. "Windsor Forest" brought him to the favorable attention of Swift and the Tory leaders in 1713. The second version of "The Rape of the Lock" established his reputation as the most brilliant poet of the age. But two incidents at this time led to his estrangement from Addison: one was Addison's advice that he should not try to improve upon the *merum sal* of the first version of "The Rape"; the other was Pope's coarse attack on John Dennis under the guise of a defense of Addison's "Cato" (which Addison refused to notice). In 1713, he became a member of the Scriblerus Club with the Tory wits, Prior, Gay, and Swift.

With the first four books of his translation of the "Iliad," in June, 1715, the second period of his authorship may be said to begin. The fifth and sixth books did not appear till May, 1720. He was one of the few poets who made literature pay, since for the translation alone he received the remarkable sum of £5320. With this money, he proceeded to enjoy himself as much as his bad health and his enemies would let him: he leased a house and garden at Twickenham on the Thames, not far from London, and lived there for the rest of his life. Near by were Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whom at first he liked and later hated, Martha and Teresa Blount, and Lord Bolingbroke.

Having succeeded with Homer, Pope tried his hand at Shakspere. The result called forth Lewis Theobald's well-deserved, caustic review, which in turn led to Pope's elevating "Tibbald" as the King of the Dunces in the first three books of the "Dunciad" (1728). In the meantime he brought out a translation of the "Odyssey," largely through the coöperation of William Brome and Elijah Fenton, who translated twelve books but were given credit for only five. The third period covers the years of his moral and satiric essays, which constitute Pope's most brilliant poetry. In 1731, under the influence of Bolingbroke, he published the "Essay on Taste," the first of the "Moral Essays." The first of the "Imitations of Horace" came out in 1733, in which year also appeared the "Essay on Man" in three books, with a fourth in 1734. In 1737 the first authorized edition of Pope's letters came out, all carefully revised and polished so as to be worthy of the greatest poet of the time. A fourth book was added to "The Dunciad," and the whole poem was revised, with Bishop Warburton's advice, in 1742; and therein, Theobald was deposed in favor of a later enemy, Colley Cibber, whose very cleverness paradoxically won him his exaltation to the throne of Dulness. Pope died on May 30, 1744, and was buried in Twickenham Church.

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Ode on Solitude

HAPPY the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mixed, sweet recreation:
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

(c. 1700)

The Dying Christian to His Soul[1]

I

VITAL spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

II

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away.
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be Death?

III

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy Victory?
O Death! where is thy Sting?

(1712)

[1] See p. 133.

Windsor Forest

THE Groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspir'd with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again;
Not Chaos-like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But, as the world, harmoniously confus'd:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspers'd in lawns and op'ning glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend.
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are born,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
Though gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those gods appear.
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crown'd,
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamel'd ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.
 Not thus the land appear'd in ages past,
A dreary desert, and a gloomy waste,

To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
And kings more furious and severe than they;
Who claim'd the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:
Cities laid waste, they storm'd the dens and caves,
(For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves,)
What could be free, when lawless beasts obey'd,
And ev'n the elements a tyrant sway'd?
In vain kind seasons swell'd the teeming grain,
Soft show'rs distill'd, and suns grew warm in vain;
The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,
And famish'd dies amidst his ripen'd fields.
What wonder then, a beast or subject slain
Were equal crimes in a despotic reign?
Both doom'd alike, for sportive tyrants bled,
But while the subject starv'd, the beast was fed.
Proud Nimrod[1] first the bloody chase began,
A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:
Our haughty Norman[2] boasts that barb'rous name,
And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.
The fields are ravish'd from th' industrious swains,
From men their cities, and from gods their fanes:
The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er;
The hollow winds through naked temples roar;
Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd;
O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind;
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.
Aw'd by his Nobles, by his Commons curst,
Th' Oppressor rul'd tyrannic where he durst,
Stretch'd o'er the Poor and Church his iron rod,
And serv'd alike his Vassals and his God.
Whom ev'n the Saxon spar'd and bloody Dane,
The wanton victims of his sport remain.
But see, the man who spacious regions gave
A waste for beasts, himself deny'd a grave![3]

[1] "Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord."—Genesis, x, 9.
[2] William the Conqueror.
[3] This is true only in the sense that the burial of William was not allowed to proceed till the land in which the grave was dug was purchased from the owner, who said his father had been violently deprived of it.

Stretch'd on the lawn his second hope[1] survey,
At once the chaser, and at once the prey:
Lo Rufus,[2] tugging at the deadly dart,
Bleeds in the Forest like a wounded hart.
Succeeding monarchs heard the subjects' cries,
Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful cottage rise.
Then gath'ring flocks on unknown mountains fed,
O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread,
The forests wonder'd at th' unusual grain,
And secret transport touch'd the conscious swain.
Fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess, rears
Her cheerful head, and leads the golden years.
Ye vig'rous swains! while youth ferments your blood,
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,
Now range the hills, the gameful woods beset,
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.
When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,
Panting with hope, he tries the furrow'd grounds;
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Couch'd close he lies, and meditates[3] the prey:
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,
'Till hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling net.
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)
When Albion sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless town, with ease and plenty blest,
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest;
Sudden they seize th' amaz'd, defenceless prize,
And high in air Britannia's standard flies.
See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,

[1] His second hope was his second son, Richard, who was said to have been killed by a stag in the New Forest.
[2] William Rufus (1060–1100), slain by an arrow in the New Forest. He succeeded his father, William I, in 1087.
[3] lies in wait for.

The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?

Thy trees, fair Windsor! now shall leave their woods,
And half thy forests rush into thy floods,
Bear Britain's thunder, and her Cross display,
To the bright regions of the rising day;
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen pole:
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales!
For me[1] the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Phœbus warm the rip'ning ore to gold.
The time shall come, when free as seas or wind,
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the regions they divide;
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,
And feather'd people crowd my wealthy side,
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire!
O stretch thy reign, fair Peace! from shore to shore,
Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more;
Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of kings behold,
And other Mexicos be roof'd with gold.
Exil'd by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barb'rous Discord dwell;
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And Mad Ambition shall attend her there:
There purple Vengeance bath'd in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires:
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,

[1] the god of the river, Father Thames.

And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain.
Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallow'd lays
Touch the fair fame of Albion's golden days:
The thoughts of gods let Granville's[1] verse recite,
And bring the scenes of op'ning fate to light.
My humble Muse, in unambitious strains,
Paints the green forests and the flow'ry plains,
Where Peace descending bids her olives spring,
And scatters blessings from her dove-like wing.
Ev'n I more sweetly pass my careless days,
Pleas'd in the silent shade with empty praise;
Enough for me, that to the list'ning swains
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.

(1713)

An Essay on Criticism

PART I

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' offence
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;
A fool might once himself alone expose,
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share;
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit,[2] 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgment too?
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find

[1] George Granville, Lord Lansdowne (1667–1735), a poor poet but a patron of Pope's. Pope dedicated this poem to him.
[2] creative power; genius.

Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light;
The lines, though touch'd but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly trac'd,
Is by ill-colouring but the more disgrac'd,
So by false learning is good sense defac'd:
Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools.
In search of wit[1] these lose their common sense,
And then turn critics in their own defence:
Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a rival's or an eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Mævius[2] scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are, who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for wits, then poets past,
Turn'd critics next, and prov'd plain fools at last.
Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learn'd witlings, num'rous in our isle,
As half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile;
Unfinish'd things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal:
To tell[3] 'em, would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.
Nature to all things fix'd the limits fit,
And wisely curb'd proud man's pretending wit.[4]
As on the land while here the ocean gains,
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid pow'r of understanding fails;

[1] the discovery of hidden resemblances between objects apparently unlike.
[2] a dull poet who attacked Vergil and Horace.
[3] count [4] intellect.

Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science only will one genius fit;
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confin'd to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gained before,
By vain ambition still to make them more;
Each might his sev'ral province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides:
In some fair body thus th' informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains;
Itself unseen, but in th' effects, remains.
Some, to whom Heav'n in wit[1] has been profuse,
Want as much more,[2] to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'Tis more to guide, than spur the Muse's steed;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed;
The winged courser, like a gen'rous[3] horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.
Those rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodis'd;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.
Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod;
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,
And urg'd the rest by equal steps to rise.

[1] creative power. [2] as much more judgment [3] thoroughbred.

Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n.
The gen'rous critic fann'd the poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd:
But following wits from that intention stray'd,
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid;
Against the poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.
So modern 'pothecaries, taught the art
By doctor's bills[1] to play the doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they.
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts how poems may be made.
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.

You then whose judgment the right course would steer,
Know well each Ancient's proper character;
His fable, subject, scope in ev'ry page;
Religion, country, genius of his age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.[2]

When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:
But when t' examine ev'ry part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checks the bold design;
And rules as strict his labour'd work confine,

[1] prescriptions. [2] Publius Vergilius Maro, born 70 B.C. near Mantua.

As if the Stagirite[1] o'erlook'd each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them.
 Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky licence answer to the full
Th' intent propos'd, that licence is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which, without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;[2]
But though the ancients thus their rules invade,
(As kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end;
Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.
The critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.
 I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults.
Some figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,

[1] Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. at Stagira in Macedonia.

[2] This couplet, ll. 159–60, in the earlier editions followed l. 151, but was transferred to its present position by Pope in the edition of 1743. He apparently did not observe that this order makes "Pegasus" the subject of "snatch a grace," l. 153.

Due distance reconciles to form and grace.
A prudent chief not always must display
His pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array,
But with th' occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
 Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive War, and all-involving Age.
See from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting pæans ring!
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
O may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights;
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
To teach vain wits a science little known,
T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

PART II

 Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules
Is pride the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever Nature has in worth deny'd,
She gives in large recruits[1] of needful pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind:
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,

[1] supplies.

And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of ev'ry friend—and ev'ry foe.
A *little learning* is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian[1] spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fir'd at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!
A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the whole nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The gen'rous pleasure to be charm'd with wit.
But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults, one quiet tenour keep;
We cannot blame indeed—but we may sleep.
In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome,
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!)

[1] The Muses were first worshipped in Pieria on Mount Olympus and were called "Pierides."

No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes;
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;
The whole at once is bold, and regular.
 Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In ev'ry work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due;
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
T' avoid great errors, must the less commit:
Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,
For not to know some trifles, is a praise.
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the whole depend upon a part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one lov'd folly sacrifice.
 Once on a time, La Mancha's knight,[1] they say,
A certain bard encount'ring on the way,
Discours'd in terms as just, with looks as sage,
As e'er could Dennis,[2] of the Grecian stage;
Concluding all were desp'rate sots and fools,
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produc'd his play, and begg'd the knight's advice;
Made him observe the subject, and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities; what not?
All which, exact to rule, were brought about,
Were but a combat in the lists left out.
"What! leave the combat out?" exclaims the knight;
Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite.
"Not so by Heav'n" (he answers in a rage),
"Knights, squires, and steeds, must enter on the stage."
So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain.
"Then build a new, or act it in a plain."

[1] Don Quixote. The incident was taken from the "Second Part of Don Quixote," written by Don Alonzo Fernandez de Avellanada in 1614 and afterwards translated and added to by Le Sage, who was the first to tell this story.

[2] John Dennis (1657–1734), a poor dramatist and a savage critic. He and Pope were constantly at odds.

Thus critics, of less judgment than caprice,
Curious not knowing, not exact but nice,
Form short ideas; and offend in arts
(As most in manners) by a love to parts.
Some to *Conceit* alone their taste confine,
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets, like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit[1] is nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;
Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.
Others for *Language* all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still,—the style is excellent;
The sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found:
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on every place;
The face of nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like th' unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words express'd,
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd:
For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,
As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,

[1] A propriety of thoughts and words.—*Dryden.*

Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.
Unlucky, as Fungoso[1] in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets drest.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are try'd,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
But most by numbers judge a poet's song;
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds: as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvary'd chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees":
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with "sleep":
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's strength, and Waller's sweetness join.[2]

[1] Fungoso, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour," is a poor student who follows the fashion afar off.

[2] Sir John Denham (1615–1669) and Edmund Waller (1606–1687) were early poets of the neo-classical school.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla[1] scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus'[2] varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove[3]
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love;
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdu'd by sound!
The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.

Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.
At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense;
That heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is apply'd
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,

[1] One of Diana's attendants in the "Æneid" (vii, 808–811), noted for swiftness of foot.

[2] See "Alexander's Feast," l. 20, n. Pope accepts Dryden's Timotheus.

[3] Alexander the Great, who was said to be the son of the Libyan Zeus Ammon.

And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Though each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
 Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with Quality.
A constant critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.
What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
 The vulgar thus through imitation err;
As oft the learn'd by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong:
So schismatics the plain believers quit,
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.
Some praise at morning what they blame at night;
But always think the last opinion right.
A Muse by these is like a mistress us'd,
This hour she's idolis'd, the next abus'd;
While their weak heads, like towns unfortify'd,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still, they say;
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.

Once School-divines this zealous isle o'er-spread;
Who knew most Sentences,[1] was deepest read;
Faith, gospel, all, seem'd made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted:
Scotists and Thomists,[2] now, in peace remain,
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane.[3]
If faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,
What wonder modes in wit should take their turn?
Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit;
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as fools are pleas'd to laugh.
Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:
Fondly we think we honour merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men.
Parties in wit attend on those of state,
And public faction doubles private hate.
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaus;[4]
But sense surviv'd, when merry jests were past;
For rising merit will buoy up at last.
Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns[5] must arise:
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoilus[6] again would start up from the dead.
Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue;
But like a shadow, proves the substance true;
For envy'd wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known

[1] Peter Lombard (c. 1090–1164) wrote four books of Sentences, subtle disquisitions on theology.

[2] Followers of Duns Scotus (c. 1260–1308) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1227–1274), rival mediæval philosophers.

[3] A place where old and second-hand books were sold formerly, near Smithfield.—*Pope.*

[4] Jeremy Collier (1650–1726), the parson in his "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage" (1698), and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687), the critic and the beau, in his "Rehearsal" attacked Dryden savagely.

[5] Sir Richard Blackmore (c. 1651–1729) and the Rev. Luke Milbourn (1622–1668) wrote against Dryden.

[6] A Greek critic of the fourth century who unjustly attacked Homer and who according to stories was either crucified or stoned for his unfavorable strictures on the poet.

Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.
When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays,
It draws up vapours which obscure its rays;
But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories, and augment the day.
Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost, who stays till all commend.
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.
So when the faithful pencil has design'd
Some bright idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready Nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colours soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treach'rous colours the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!
Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-liv'd vanity is lost:
Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.
What is this wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;
Then most our trouble still when most admir'd,
And still the more we give, the more requir'd;
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;
'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone!
If wit so much from ign'rance undergo,
Ah let not learning too commence its foe!

Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And such were prais'd who but endeavour'd well:
Though triumphs were to gen'rals only due,
Crowns were reserv'd to grace the soldiers too.
Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools:
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill author is as bad a friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urg'd through sacred[1] lust of praise!
Ah ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the critic let the man be lost.
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;
To err is human, to forgive, divine.
But if in noble minds some dregs remain
Not yet purg'd off, of spleen and sour disdain;
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.
No pardon vile obscenity should find,
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind;
But dulness with obscenity must prove
As shameful sure as impotence in love.
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thriv'd with large increase:
When love was all an easy monarch's care;
Seldom at council, never in a war:
Jilts rul'd the state, and statesmen farces writ;
Nay wits had pensions, and young lords had wit:
The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
And not a mask[2] went unimprov'd away:
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And Virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before.
The following licence of a foreign reign[3]
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus[4] drain;

[1] A Latinism for "accursed": Vergil's *auri sacra fames*, "Æneid," iii, 57.
[2] Ladies wore masks at the theatre that they might attend without being recognized. [3] That of William III, 1689–1702.
[4] Lælius Socinus (1525–1562) and his nephew Faustus Socinus (1539–1604) were Unitarians, who rejected belief in the divinity of Christ, in original sin, and in hell.

Then unbelieving priests reform'd the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;
Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute:
Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare,
And Vice admir'd to find a flatt'rer there!
Encourag'd thus, Wit's Titans brav'd the skies,
And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemies.
These monsters, critics! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice;
All seems infected that th' infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.

PART III

LEARN then what Morals critics ought to show,
For 'tis but half a judge's task, to know.
'Tis not enough, taste, judgment, learning, join;
In all you speak, let truth and candour shine:
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow; but seek your friendship too.
Be silent always, when you doubt your sense;
And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence:
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so;
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,
And make each day a critic on the last.
'Tis not enough your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.
Without good-breeding, truth is disapprov'd;
That only makes superior sense belov'd.
Be niggards of advice on no pretence;
For the worst avarice is that of sense.
With mean complacence ne'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise.

'Twere well might critics still this freedom take,
But Appius[1] reddens at each word you speak,
And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.
Fear most to tax an honourable fool,
Whose right it is, uncensur'd, to be dull;
Such, without wit, are poets when they please,
As without learning they can take degrees.[2]
Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful satires,
And flattery to fulsome dedicators,
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more,
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.
'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain:
Your silence there is better than your spite,
For who can rail so long as they can write?
Still humming on, their drowsy course they keep,
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep.
False steps but help them to renew the race,
As, after stumbling, jades will mend their pace.
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
Still run on poets, in a raging vein,
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.
Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd critics too.
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always list'ning to himself appears.
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,
From Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's Tales.[3]
With him, most authors steal their works, or buy;
Garth did not write his own Dispensary.[4]

[1] John Dennis was so called from his play, "Appius and Virginia."
[2] Noblemen ("Honourable fools") and their sons were admitted to the degree of M.A. without examination, after keeping the terms of two years.
[3] Tom Durfey (1653–1723), a poor versifier of moral and comic stories.
[4] Dr. Samuel Garth (1661–1719), a physician and poet, whose "Dispensary" was the product of his vocation and his avocation.

Name a new play, and he's the poet's friend,
Nay show'd his faults—but when would poets mend?
No place so sacred from such fops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard:[1]
Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead:
For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
It still looks home, and short excursions makes;
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,
And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.
But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbias'd, or by favour, or by spite;
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right;
Though learn'd, well-bred; and though well-bred, sincere;
Modestly bold, and humanly severe:
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd;
A knowledge both of books and human kind;
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?
Such once were critics; such the happy few,
Athens and Rome in better ages knew.
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore;
He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,
Led by the light of the Mæonian Star.[2]
Poets, a race long unconfin'd, and free,
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,
Receiv'd his laws; and stood convinc'd 'twas fit,
Who conquer'd nature, should preside o'er wit.[3]
Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way.

[1] St. Paul's Churchyard was a favorite place for booksellers' shops.
[2] Homer, because he was believed to have been a native of Mæonia.
[3] Aristotle had written on physics and poetics.

He, who supreme in judgment, as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judg'd with coolness, though he sung with fire;
His precepts teach but what his works inspire.
Our critics take a contrary extreme,
They judge with fury, but they write with fle'me:
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong translations
By wits, than critics in as wrong quotations.
See Dionysius[1] Homer's thoughts refine,
And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line!
Fancy and art in gay Petronius[2] please,
The scholar's learning, with the courtier's ease.
In grave Quintilian's[3] copious work, we find
The justest rules, and clearest method join'd:
Thus useful arms in magazines we place,
All rang'd in order, and dispos'd with grace,
But less to please the eye, than arm the hand,
Still fit for use, and ready at command.
Thee, bold Longinus![4] all the Nine inspire,
And bless their critic with a poet's fire.
An ardent judge, who zealous in his trust,
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;
Whose own example strengthens all his laws;
And is himself that great Sublime he draws.
Thus long succeeding critics justly reign'd,
Licence repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd.
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew;
And arts still follow'd where her eagles flew;
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw learning fall, and Rome.
With tyranny, then superstition join'd,
As that the body, this enslav'd the mind;
Much was believ'd, but little understood,
And to be dull was constru'd to be good;
A second deluge learning thus o'er-run,

[1] Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 57–7 B.C.), a Greek rhetorician and historian.

[2] Petronius Arbiter (d. 66 A.D.), the reputed author of the "Satiricon."

[3] M. Fabius Quintilianus (c. 35–100), the author of "De Institutione Oratoria."

[4] Dionysius Cassius Longinus (c. 213–273), a Greek rhetorician and philosopher, to whom has been attributed the authorship of "On the Sublime."

And the monks finish'd what the Goths begun.
At length Erasmus,[1] that great injur'd name,
(The glory of the priesthood, and the shame!)
Stem'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.
But see! each Muse, in Leo's golden days,[2]
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,
Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;
A Raphael[3] painted, and a Vida[4] sung.
Immortal Vida: on whose honour'd brow
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow:
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!
But soon by impious arms from Latium chas'd,[5]
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd;
Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance,
But critic-learning flourish'd most in France:
The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys;
And Boileau[6] still in right of Horace sways.
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,
And kept unconquer'd, and uncivilis'd;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presum'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restor'd wit's fundamental laws.
Such was the Muse, whose rules and practice tell,
"Nature's chief master-piece is writing well."[7]

[1] Erasmus (c. 1466–1536), the Dutch humanist and Oxford reformer.
[2] Leo X (1475–1521), the great Pope of the Renaissance.
[3] Raphael (1483–1520).
[4] Marco Girolamo Vida (1490–1566), author of "De Arte Poetica" and of Latin poems. He was born at Cremona.
[5] Rome was sacked by the Duke of Bourbon in 1527.
[6] Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), author of "Art Poétique" in four cantos.
[7] Quoted from the "Essay on Poetry" by John Sheffield, Earl of Musgrave and Duke of Buckingham (1648–1721). He also wrote an "Essay on Satire."

Such was Roscommon,[1] not more learn'd than good,
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And ev'ry author's merit, but his own.
Such late was Walsh[2]—the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
To failings mild, but zealous for desert;
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.
This humble praise, lamented shade! receive,
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give:
The Muse, whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescrib'd her heights, and prun'd her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
But in low numbers short excursions tries:
Content, if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
The learn'd reflect on what before they knew:
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame;
Averse alike to flatter, or offend;
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

The Rape of the Lock

An Heroi-comical Poem

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.[3]
Mart. *Epigr.* xii, 84.

Nolueram, etc.—It appears, by this Motto, that the following poem was written or published at the Lady's request. But there are some further circumstances not unworthy relating. Mr. Caryl (a Gentleman[4] who was Secretary to Queen Mary, wife of James II., whose fortunes he followed into France, author of the Comedy of "Sir Solomon Single," and of several translations in Dryden's "Miscel-

[1] Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (c. 1633–1685), who wrote an "Essay on Translated Verse" and translated Horace's "Art of Poetry."
[2] See p. 125.
[3] I was unwilling, Belinda, to ravish thy locks, but I am glad to have granted this much thy prayers.
[4] He was a *nephew* of that "Gentleman."—*Sherburn.*

lanies") originally proposed the subject to him in a view of putting an end, by this piece of ridicule, to a quarrel that was risen between two noble families, those of Lord Petre and of Mrs. Fermor, on the trifling occasion of his having cut off a lock of her hair. The author sent it to the Lady, with whom he was acquainted; and she took it so well as to give about copies of it. That first sketch (we learn from one of his Letters[1]) was written in less than a fortnight, in 1711, in two Cantoes only, and it was so printed; first, in a Miscellany of Bern. Lintot's, without the name of the author. But it was received so well that he made it more considerable the next year by the addition of the machinery of the Sylphs, and extended it to five Cantoes. —*Pope's note.*

To Mrs. Arabella Fermor

Madam,—It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to You. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own But as it was communicate with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a bookseller, you had the goodnature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forc'd to, before I had executed half my design, for the machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The machinery, madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons are made to act in a poem: For the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady; but 'tis so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book call'd "Le Comte de Gabalis,"[2] which both in its title and size is so like a novel, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The

[1] Really from his notes.—*Sherburn.*

[2] Written to the Abbé Villars (1635–1673), published in 1670.

Gnomes or Dæmons of Earth delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the Air, are the best-condition'd creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following Cantoes, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the vision at the beginning, or the transformation at the end; (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person, or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so uncensur'd as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, MADAM,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
A. POPE.

CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing—This verse to Caryl,[1] Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda[2] may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord[3] t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,[4]

[1] John Caryll, an intimate Roman Catholic friend of Pope's.
[2] Miss Arabella Fermor, of a Roman Catholic family.
[3] In this case, Lord Petre, also a Catholic.
[4] When the bell was not answered, the slipper knocked the floor.

And the press'd watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian Sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head,
A Youth more glitt'ring than a birth-night beau,[1]
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say.
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!
If e'er one vision touch'd thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught;
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel-pow'rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,
To maids alone and children are reveal'd:
What though no credit doubting wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe.
Know then, unnumber'd spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.[2]
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of ombre, after death survive.

[1] The costumes for a royal birthday ball were particularly gorgeous.
[2] The box at the theatre and a fashionable circular drive in Hyde Park.

For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire:
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.
"Know farther yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embrac'd:
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though honour is the word with men below.
"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdain'd, and love deny'd:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, Your Grace salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.
"Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,

If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.
"Of these am I, who thy protection claim,[1]
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I rang'd the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend;
But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warn'd by the sylph, oh pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!"
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanish'd from thy head.
And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,

[1] Claim the right to protect thee.

Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-drest youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
 This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,

And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.[1]
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r,
The rest, the winds dispers'd in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.
All but the sylph—with careful thoughts opprest,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons strait his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seem'd but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light.
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,[2]

[1] Quite an imposing altar, if each romance were as vast as "Clelie," which consisted of ten volumes of eight hundred pages each.

[2] The gossamer, which is spun in autumn by a species of spider that has the power of sailing in the air, was formerly supposed to be the product of sun-burnt dew.—*Elwin.*

Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd;
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He rais'd his azure wand, and thus begun.
"Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and dæmons, hear!
Ye know the spheres, and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.
"Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.
"This day, black omens threat the brightest fair,
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,

Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

"To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stop'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clog'd he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or alum styptics with contracting pow'r
Shrink his thin essence like a rivel'd[1] flow'r:
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,[2]
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"

He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

[1] Wrinkled; shrivelled.
[2] The chocolate-mill.

CANTO III

CLOSE by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.[1]
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous knights,
At ombre[2] singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,[3]

[1] The fashionable dinner hour was then four o'clock.

[2] A fashionable card game of Spanish origin, played by three persons. Each person is dealt nine cards, and the person who undertakes to stand the game (*Yo soy el hombre;* "I am the man") must win more tricks than either of his opponents in order to avoid defeat (*codille*). He makes the trump In this case, Belinda, being "the man," wins the first four tricks with her trumps.

[3] The *matadores* (literally, "murderers") were the three best cards.

Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
 Behold, four kings in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair queens, whose hands sustain a flow'r,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer pow'r;
Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And parti-colour'd troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
 The skilful nymph reviews her force with care:
Let spades be trumps! she said, and trumps they were.
 Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio[1] first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio[2] forc'd to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto[3] follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd,
The rest, his many-colour'd robe conceal'd.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Lu,[4]
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor spade!
 Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of spades.
The club's black tyrant first her victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride:

[1] The highest *matadore*, the ace of spades.
[2] The second highest trump; in this case, the deuce of spades.
[3] The third highest card, the ace of clubs.
[4] In the game of Lu, the knave of clubs is the highest card and is called Pam.

What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
The baron now his diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with pow'rs combin'd
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierc'd battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.[1]
And now, (as oft in some distemper'd state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate.
An Ace of hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,

[1] If either of the antagonists made more tricks than the *ombre*, the winner took the pool, and the *ombre* has to replace it for the next game.—*Elwin.*

While China's earth receives the smoking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee, (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate![1]
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retir'd.

[1] Scylla cut off the purple or golden lock of her father Nisus's hair, on which his life depended, and gave it to his enemy Minos, with whom she had fallen in love. For this unnatural treachery she was, according to one legend, turned into a bird.

The peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide,
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd,
A wretched sylph too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urg'd the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
Or when rich china vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,"
(The victor cry'd) "the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,.
Or in a coach and six the British fair,
As long as Atalantis[1] shall be read,
Or the small pillow[2] grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What time would spare, from steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel,
The conq'ring force of unresisted steel?"

[1] A scandalous novel by Mrs. Manley, 1709.
[2] A small pillow which graced a bed when a lady received visitors in her bed-chamber.

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravish'd hair.

For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd;
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons.
Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons.

There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair-ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies;

Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fields, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

Unnumber'd throngs on ev'ry side are seen,
Of bodies chang'd to various forms by Spleen.
Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod walks;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks;
Men prove with child, as pow'rful fancy works,
And maids turn'd bottles, call aloud for corks.

Safe past the gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing spleenwort[1] in his hand.
Then thus address'd the pow'r—"Hail, wayward queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters[2] matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could case:

[1] A fern, more commonly called "miltwaste," regarded as a cure for the spleen.

[2] A cordial distilled from a mixture of spirit of wine with the rind of citrons and lemons.—*Elwin.*

Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."
 The goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his pray'r.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
 Sunk in Thalestris'[1] arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the furies issu'd at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"Oh wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cry'd
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" reply'd)
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,[2]
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrival'd shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Expos'd through crystal to the gazing eyes,

[1] Mrs. Morley, the sister of Sir George Brown, the Sir Plume of l. 121.
[2] The curl papers of ladies' hair used to be fastened with strips of pliant lead.—*Croker.*

And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;[1]
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said; then raging to Sir Plume[2] repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane[3])
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what the devil?
Z—ds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapp'd his box.
"It grieves me much" (reply'd the peer again)
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this lock, this sacred lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.
But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in tears;
On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said.
"For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,

[1] The bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, which is situated in the city and is far from the fashionable quarter.
[2] Sir George Brown. He did not like this poem.
[3] a cane made of spotted wood.

By love of courts to num'rous ills betray'd.
Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea![1]
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh had I stay'd, and said my prayers at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seem'd to tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A sylph too warn'd me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears;
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.[2]
Then grave Clarissa[3] graceful wav'd her fan;

[1] The name was given in the beginning of the 18th century to the finest kinds of black tea; but the quality now known as "Bohea" is the lowest, being the last crop of the season.—*N.E.D.*

[2] The entreaties to stay which Dido's sister, Anna, addressed to Æneas.—*Croker.*

[3] A new character introduced in the subsequent editions, to open more clearly the moral of the poem, in a parody of the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus in Homer ("Iliad"; 12, 310–28).—*Pope.*

Silence ensu'd, and thus the nymph began.
"Say why are beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels call'd, and angel-like ador'd?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd beaux,
Why bows the side-box[1] from its inmost rows;
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains:
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the small-pox, or chas'd old-age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since locks will turn to grey;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains, but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the dame, but no applause ensu'd;
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;

[1] The side-box was occupied by the men, the front-box by the women.

And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clapp'd his glad wings, and sate to view the fight:
Prop'd on their bodkin spears, the sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enrag'd Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perish'd in the throng,
One dy'd in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flow'ry margin lies
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau reviv'd again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See fierce Belinda on the baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord with manly strength endu'd,
She with one finger and a thumb subdu'd:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.

(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.[1])
"Boast not my fall" (he cry'd) "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low,
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."
"Restore the lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend 'till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees! with heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasur'd there.
There hero's wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And beau's in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows, and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dry'd butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes:
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus alone confess'd in view[2])

[1] In imitation of the progress of Agamemnon's sceptre in Homer: "Iliad," 2, 100–108.—*Pope.*

[2] Julius Proculus told the Romans Romulus had appeared to him in more than mortal splendor and bidden him tell them he had ascended to heaven.

A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,[1]
The heav'ns bespangling with dishevel'd light.
The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its progress through the skies.
This the beau monde shall from the Mall[2] survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.[3]
This Partridge[4] soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;[5]
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die:
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

(1712–14)

[1] Berenice dedicated her hair in the temple of Arsinoë at Zephyrium for her husband's safe return from Syria. When the next day her dedicated locks were missing, the astronomer Conon said they had been translated to the skies in the form of a constellation.

[2] a walk in St. James's Park. [3] a pond in the park.

[4] An almanac-maker whom Swift satirized in a parody of Partridge's almanac. Among other predictions Swift foretold Partridge's death and later confirmed it in a letter.

[5] the telescope.

Elegy

To the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady

What beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis she!—but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?
Why bade ye else, ye Pow'rs! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes;
The glorious fault of angels and of gods;
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of kings and heroes glows.
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage:
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
Like eastern kings a lazy state they keep,
And close confin'd to their own palace, sleep.
From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky.
As into air the purer spirits flow,
And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below:
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.
But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood!
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death:
Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before,
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.
Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball,
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall;
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,

And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates.
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say,
(While the long fun'rals blacken all the way)
Lo these were they, whose souls the furies steel'd,
And curs'd with hearts unknowing how to yield.
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learn'd to glow
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.
What can atone (oh ever-injur'd shade!)
Thy fate unpity'd, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or grac'd thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs compos'd,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd!
What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face?
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.
So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot;
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
Poets themselves must fall like those they sung,
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;

Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!

(1717)

Eloïsa to Abelard[1]

ARGUMENT

ABELARD and Eloïsa flourished in the twelfth century; they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in learning and beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities, they retired each to a several convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to religion. It was many years after this separation, that a letter of Abelard's to a friend, which contained the history of his misfortune, fell into the hands of Eloïsa. This awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted) which give so lively a picture of the struggles of grace and nature, virtue and passion.

IN THESE deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns;
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
Yet, yet I love!—From Abelard it came,
And Eloïsa yet must kiss the name.
Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence seal'd:
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where mix'd with God's, his lov'd Idea lies:
O write it not, my hand—the name appears
Already written—wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloïsa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.
Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains

[1] The source of the poem is an English version of the Latin letters of Abelard and Heloise, published in 1713 by John Hughes.

Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:
Ye rugged rocks! which holy knees have worn;
Ye grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid thorn!
Shrines! where their vigils pale-ey'd virgins keep,
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
Though cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,
I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
All is not heav'n's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel nature holds out half my heart;
Nor pray'rs nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
Nor tears for ages taught to flow in vain.
Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.
Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
Still breath'd in sighs, still usher'd with a tear.
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led through a sad variety of woe:
Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!
There stern religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,
There dy'd the best of passions, love and fame.
Yet write, oh write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this pow'r away;
And is my Abelard less kind than they?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare,
Love but demands what else were shed in pray'r;
No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
To read and weep is all they now can do.
Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief.
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires,
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.

Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name;
My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.
Those smiling eyes, attemp'ring ev'ry ray,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day.
Guiltless I gaz'd; heav'n listen'd while you sung;
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
From lips like those what precept fail'd to move?
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love:
Back through the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wish'd an angel whom I lov'd a man.
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see;
Nor envy them that heav'n I lose for thee.

How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which love has made?
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.
Let wealth, let honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour! what are you to love?
The jealous god, when we profane his fires,
Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who seek in love for aught but love alone.
Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all:
Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;
No, make me mistress to the man I love;
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!
Oh! happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature, law:
All then is full, possessing, and possess'd,
No craving void left aching in the breast:
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be)
And once the lot of Abelard and me.

Alas, how chang'd! what sudden horrors rise!

A naked lover bound and bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloïse? her voice, her hand,
Her poniard had oppos'd the dire command.
Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;
The crime was common, common be the pain.[1]
I can no more; by shame, by rage suppress'd,
Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.
 Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heav'n scarce believ'd the conquest it survey'd,
And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
Not on the cross my eyes were fix'd, but you:
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.
Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Still on that breast enamour'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd;
Give all thou canst—and let me dream the rest.
Ah no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes,
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.
 Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, and children of thy pray'r.
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
You rais'd these hallow'd walls;[2] the desert smil'd,
And Paradise was open'd in the wild.
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate, or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-requited heav'n:

[1] a latinism for "punishment."
[2] He founded the monastery known as the Paraclete (l. 348).

But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise.
In these lone walls (their days eternal bound)
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light;
Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' pray'rs I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)
But why should I on others' pray'rs depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclin'd
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid.
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dead repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
 Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only death, can break the lasting chain;
And here, ev'n then, shall my cold dust remain,
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.
 Ah wretch! believ'd the spouse of God in vain,
Confess'd within the slave of love and man.
Assist me, heav'n! but whence arose that pray'r?

Sprung it from piety, or from despair?
Ev'n here, where frozen chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;
I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;
Now turn'd to heav'n, I weep my past offence,
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish penitence from love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touch'd, so pierc'd, so lost as mine.
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain,—do all things but forget.
But let heav'n seize it, all at once 'tis fir'd:
Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspir'd!
Oh come! oh teach me nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself—and you.
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot:
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd;
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
"Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep";
Desires compos'd, affections ever ev'n;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heav'n.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes,
For her the Spouse prepares the bridal ring,
For her white virgins hymeneals sing,

To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.
 Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures, of unholy joy:
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatch'd away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee.
Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking dæmons all restraint remove,
And stir within me ev'ry source of love.
I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.
I wake:—no more I hear, no more I view,
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
I call aloud; it hears not what I say:
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more! methinks we wand'ring go
Through dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some mould'ring tow'r pale ivy creeps,
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.
 For thee the fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain;
Thy life a long dead calm of fix'd repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,
And mild as op'ning gleams of promis'd heav'n.
 Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.
Nature stands check'd; religion disapproves;
Even thou art cold—yet Eloïsa loves.
Ah hopeless, lasting flames! like those that burn

To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful urn.
What scenes appear where'er I turn my view?
The dear Ideas, where I fly, pursue,
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me,
Thy voice I seem in ev'ry hymn to hear,
With ev'ry bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:
In seas of flame my plunging soul is drown'd,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.
While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind, virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is op'ning on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to heav'n; dispute my heart;
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright Idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows, and those tears;
Take back my fruitless penitence and pray'rs;
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode;
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!
No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I view!)
Long lov'd, ador'd Ideas, all adieu!
Oh grace serene! oh virtue heav'nly fair!
Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And Faith, our early immortality!
Enter, each mild, each amicable guest;

Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!
 See in her cell sad Eloïsa spread,
Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead.
In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound.
"Come, sister, come!" (it said, or seem'd to say)
"Thy place is here, sad sister, come away!
Once like thyself, I trembled, wept, and pray'd,
Love's victim then, though now a sainted maid:
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,
Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here."
 I come, I come! prepare your roseate bow'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow:
Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day;
See my lips trèmble, and my eye-balls roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!
Ah no—in sacred vestments may'st thou stand,
The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me to die.
Ah then, thy once-lov'd Eloïsa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
'Til ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath be o'er;
And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.
O Death all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we dote on, when 'tis man we love.
 Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy,
(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy)
In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drown'd,
Bright clouds descend, and angels watch thee round,
From op'ning skies may streaming glories shine,

And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.
May one kind grave unite each hapless name,[1]
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;
If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds;
Then sadly say, with mutual pity mov'd,
"Oh may we never love as these have lov'd!"
From the full choir when loud hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from heav'n,
One human tear shall drop and be forgiv'n.
And sure if fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
Condemn'd whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more;
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well;
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost;
He best can paint 'em who shall feel 'em most.[2]

(1717)

[1] Abelard and Eloïsa were interred in the same grave, or in monuments adjoining, in the Monastery of the Paraclete; he died in the year 1142, she in 1164.—*Pope.*

[2] The rather weak lines, 359–66, were added as a compliment to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to whom Pope sent a copy of the poem when she was with her husband in Constantinople (June, 1717). In his letter to her he said, "you will find one passage, that I cannot tell whether to wish you should understand, or not." From a too ardent admirer Pope changed to a bitter enemy and a scurrilous satirist of the lady.

An Essay on Man

Argument of Epistle I

of the nature and state of man, with respect to the universe

Of man in the abstract. I. That we can judge only with regard to our *own system*, being ignorant of the *relations* of systems and things. II. That man is not to be deemed *imperfect*, but a being suited to his *place* and *rank* in the creation, agreeable to the *general order* of things, and comformable to *ends* and *relations* to him unknown. III. That it is partly upon his *ignorance* of *future* events, and partly upon the *hope* of a *future* state, that all his happiness in the present depends. IV. The *pride* of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The *impiety* of putting himself in the place of *God*, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of his dispensations. V. The *absurdity* of conceiting himself the *final cause* of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the *moral* world, which is not in the *natural*. VI. The *unreasonableness* of his complaints against *Providence*, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though, to possess any of the *sensitive faculties* in a higher degree, would render him miserable. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal *order* and *gradation* in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a *subordination* of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of *sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason;* that reason alone countervails all the other faculties. VIII. How much further this *order* and *subordination* of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected *creation* must be destroyed. IX. The *extravagance, madness*, and *pride* of such a desire. X. The consequence of all, the *absolute submission* due to Providence, both as to our *present* and *future* state.

EPISTLE I

AWAKE, my St. John![1] leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate[2] free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid[3] where we can;
But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I. Say first, of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of man, what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Through worlds unnumber'd though the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What vary'd being peoples ev'ry star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?

[1] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), had been a Tory Secretary of State under Anne, had intrigued with the Jacobites, and on the accession of George I fled to France in 1716. He was tried for treason and dropped from the peerage. In 1723 he was allowed to return to England, and in 1725 he settled near Pope's estate at Twickenham. He urged Pope to write this poem and supplied most of the philosophic ideas, so that the poet was not always aware of their theological implications.

[2] wander. [3] Favourably disposed; kindly.—*N.E.D.*

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?
II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?
Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
That Wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must full or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;
Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong?
Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, though labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Ægypt's god:
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place;
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,

What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blest to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk,[1] or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,

[1] the sun's path in the heavens; the ecliptic.

Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, If man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of Order, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew,
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No, ('tis reply'd) the first almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
Why then a Borgia,[1] or a Catiline?[2]
Who knows but he, whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon[3] loose to scourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.
Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The gen'ral Order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.
VI. What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest with all?
The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,

[1] Cesare Borgia (1478–1507), the son of Pope Alexander VI, one of the most notorious figures in Renaissance Italy.
[2] Lucius Sergius Catiline (108–62 B.C.), whose conspiracy Cicero denounced
[3] Alexander the Great.

But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood:
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier,
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how ally'd;
What thin partitions sense[1] from thought divide:
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,

[1] sensation.

Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?
VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing.—On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread Order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—Oh madness! pride! impiety!
IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing Mind of All ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,

Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X. Cease then, nor Order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.*

(1733)

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot[1]

Being the Prologue to the Satires

Advertisement

to the first publication of this epistle

This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thoughts of publishing it, till it pleased some persons of rank and fortune (the Authors of "Verses to the Imitator of Horace," and of an "Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court")[2] to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my writings (of which, being public, the Public is judge) but my *person, morals*, and *family*, whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of *myself*, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this Epistle. If it have anything pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the *truth* and the *sentiment;* and if anything offensive, it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend, *the vicious* or *the ungenerous.*

Many will know their own pictures in it, there being not a circumstance but what is true; but I have, for the most part, spared their *names*, and they may escape being laughed at, if they please.

I would have some of them know, it was owing to the request of the learned and candid Friend to whom it is inscribed, that I make not as free use of theirs as they have done of mine. However, I shall have this advantage, and honour, on my side, that whereas, by their proceeding, any abuse may be directed at any man, no injury can possibly be done by mine, since a nameless character can never be found out, but by its *truth* and *likeness.*

[1] Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), physician in ordinary to Queen Anne until her death in 1714, a member of the Royal College of Physicians, author of the "History of John Bull" and the "Art of Political Lying," and one of the leading members of the Scriblerus Club.

[2] The "Verses" was probably written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey in collaboration in 1733. Pope had viciously attacked Hervey in the "Miscellanies" (1727), the "Dunciad" (1728), and the "First Satire of the Second Book of Horace" (1733), where he had also attacked Lady Mary. Hervey retorted in the "Epistle" (1733). Pope came back more viciously than ever in the "Second Satire of the Second Book" and in this poem.

P. SHUT, shut the door, good John![1] fatigu'd, I said.
Tie up the knocker! say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The Dog-star rages! nay, 't is past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide.
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day[2] to me:
Then from the Mint[3] walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy! to catch me just at dinner-time.
Is there a parson much be-mus'd in beer,[4]
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
A clerk, foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza when he should engross?
Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
All fly to Twit'nam,[5] and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur,[6] whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
Poor Cornus[7] sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my life! (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)
What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love?

[1] John Serle, his faithful servant, remembered in his will.—*Warton.*

[2] Debtors could not be arrested on Sunday.

[3] A district in Southwark, so called because the Mint was situated there. In it, debtors and criminals were free from arrest. The privilege was abolished in the reigns of William III and George I.

[4] Lawrence Eusden (1688–1730), Gray's "drunken parson," poet laureate after Rowe. [5] Twickenham on the Thames, where Pope had his villa.

[6] Arthur Moore, whose gravity was balanced by the giddiness of his son, James Moore Smyth. He was M. P. (1706–22) and Commissioner of Trade and Plantations.

[7] Horace Walpole said Cornus was his father, Sir Robert, whose wife left him in 1734. He also spoke of his mother as being half mad.

A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped,
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seiz'd and ty'd down to judge, how wretched I,
Who can't be silent and who will not lie:
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave exceeds all pow'r of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine years."[1]
"Nine years!" cries he, who, high in Drury Lane,[2]
Lull'd by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,[3]
Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends:
"The piece, you think, is incorrect? why take it:
I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it."
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.[4]
Pitholeon[5] sends to me: "You know his Grace:
I want a patron; ask him for a place."
Pitholeon libell'd me—"But here's a letter
Informs you, sir, 't was when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll[6] invites to dine;
He'll write a Journal, or he'll turn Divine."
Bless me! a packet.—"'T is a stranger sues,
A virgin tragedy, an orphan Muse."[7]
If I dislike it, "Furies, death, and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the stage."
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The play'rs and I are, luckily, no friends.

[1] Horace's "Ars Poetica," 338: *Nonumque prematur in annum.*

[2] Like Grub Street, the district where indigent authors lived.

[3] The end of Trinity term, the third of the four terms into which the year was divided. It marked the close of the London season.

[4] The reference is said to be to Theobald, the first hero of "The Dunciad."

[5] A pretentious poet of Rhodes (Horace, Satires I, x, 22). Pitholeon is said in the MS note to the Bodleian folio to be Welsted (See l. 375).—*Elwin.*

[6] Edmund Curll (1675–1747), an unscrupulous publisher, who through the favor of this invitation shows he is willing to publish an attack on Pope in a journal which Welsted might write; or Welsted will "turn divine" and publish a dull book on theology (as he did) unless Pope helps him to a patron.

[7] A tragedy called the "Virgin Queen," by R. Barford (1729), who displeased Pope by daring to adopt the fine machinery of the sylphs in an heroi-comical poem called the "Assembly."—*Warton.*

Fir'd that the house reject him, "'Sdeath I'll print it,
And shame the fools—your int'rest, sir, with Lintot."[1]
"Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much."
"Not, sir, if you revise it, and retouch."
All my demurs but double his attacks;
At last he whispers, "Do; and we go snacks."
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,
"Sir, let me see your works and you no more."
'T is sung, when Midas' ears began to spring
(Midas, a sacred person and a king),
His very minister who spy'd them first
(Some say his queen) was forc'd to speak, or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?
A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous things;
I'd never name queens, ministers, or kings.
Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick;
'T is nothing— *P.* Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, Dunciad! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an ass.
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?),
The queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? Take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus![2] round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:
Pit, box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb through,
He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again,
Thron'd in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer
Lost the arch'd eyebrow, or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley[3] still his lord, and whore?

[1] Bernard Lintot (1675–1736) the publisher, who brought out Pope's translation of Homer.
[2] The name of a poetaster in Juvenal.
[3] Colley Cibber, the second hero of "The Dunciad" (1671–1757).

His butchers Henley, his free-masons Moore?[1]
Does not one table Bavius[2] still admit?
Still to one bishop Philips[3] seem a wit?
Still Sappho[4]— *A.* Hold! for God sake—you'll offend,
No names—be calm—learn prudence of a friend.
I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these— *P.* One flatt'rer's worse than all.
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent.
One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:
One from all Grub-street[5] will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.
This prints my letters,[6] that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, "Subscribe, subscribe."
There are, who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace, and, though lean, am short,
Ammon's great son[7] one shoulder had too high,
Such Ovid's nose, and, "Sir! you have an eye"—
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see
All that disgrac'd my betters, met in me.
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
"Just so immortal Maro[8] held his head":
And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer dy'd three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

[1] Orator Henley, who declaimed on Sundays on religious subjects and on Wednesdays on the sciences. His oratory was among the butchers in Newport Market and Butcher Row.—*Bowles.* James Moore Smyth was of this society and frequently headed their processions.—*Warburton.*

[2] Another Roman poetaster, on a par with Codrus and Mævius.

[3] Ambrose Philips, writer of pastorals. Bishop Boulter was his great friend and patron. See p. 171.

[4] Lady Mary W. Montagu.

[5] The abode of literary hacks, now called Milton Street.

[6] The whole miserable business of the printing of Pope's "Letters," in which the poet had no very honourable share, is given in Courthope's "Life."

[7] Alexander the Great, reputed to have been the son of Jupiter Ammon.

[8] Vergil.

I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd.
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease, my life,
To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care,
And teach the being you preserv'd, to bear.
But why then publish? Granville the polite,[1]
And knowing Walsh,[2] would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth[3] inflam'd with early praise;
And Congreve[4] lov'd, and Swift[5] endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield[6] read;
Ev'n mitred Rochester[7] would nod the head,
And St. John's self[8] (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms receiv'd one poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.[9]
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence,
While pure description held the place of sense?
Like gentle Fanny's[10] was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon[11] draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
Yet then did Dennis[12] rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd—I was not in debt.
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober critic come abroad?

[1] See "Windsor Forest," l. 425, n. [2] See p. 125.
[3] See "Essay on Criticism," l. 619, n. [4] See p. 87. [5] See p. 175.
[6] Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury (1660–1718); John, Baron Somers (1651–1716); John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave and Duke of Buckingham (1648–1721).
[7] Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester (1662–1732).
[8] See "Essay on Man," n. on l. 1.
[9] Historians; but Burnet's "History of My Own Times" was much superior to Oldmixon's "History of England during the Reign of the Royal House of Stuart" (1730) or Cooke's "The Scandalous Chronicle" (1726).
[10] Lord Hervey. See l. 305, n.
[11] Charles Gildon (1665–1724), who Pope pretended to suspect had accepted £10 from Addison for a Life of Wycherley, in which he himself was abused.—*Elwin.*
[12] See "Essay on Criticism," l. 270, n.

If wrong, I smil'd; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley[1] down to piddling Tibbalds.[2]
Each wight who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespear's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excus'd them too:
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 't is not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?
The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,[3]
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a year;
He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left;
And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning;
And he, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.[4]
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!

[1] Richard Bentley (1662–1742), the famous Greek scholar who criticized Pope's translation of Homer as a very pretty poem but not Homer.

[2] Lewis Theobald (1688–1744), the first hero of "The Dunciad."

[3] Ambrose Philips no more pilfered pastorals than Pope did. He did translate Petit de la Croix's "Contes Persans" (1709) and did not deny the charge that he got thirty pence a piece for them.

[4] Nahum Tate (1652–1715), a poet laureate who died in the Mint. He wrote most of the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel."

And swear, not Addison himself was safe.
Peace to all such! But were there one whose fires
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?
What though my name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaster'd posts, with claps, in capitals?[1]
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers' load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the race that write;
I kept, like Asian monarchs, from their sight:
Poems I heeded (now be-rhym'd so long)
No more than thou, great George![2] a birthday song.
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;
Nor like a puppy, daggled through the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cry'd,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,

[1] The poet's name in red capitals was often printed in clap-bills, which were pasted on the walls or posts as advertisements.
[2] George II.

To Bufo[1] left the whole Castalian state.
 Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by every quill;
Fed with soft dedication all day long,[2]
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His library (where busts of poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise,
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.
 May some choice patron bless each grey goose quill!
May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,
Or envy holds a whole week's war with sense,
Or simple pride for flatt'ry makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Blest be the great! for those they take away,
And those they left me; for they left me Gay;[3]
Left me to see neglected genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My verse and Queensb'ry[4] weeping o'er thy urn!
 Oh, let me live my own, and die so too!
(To live and die is all I have to do:)
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,

[1] Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax (1661–1715). Castalia was a fountain on Mt. Parnassus, and so an inspirer to poetry.

[2] By Addison, in his "Account of the Poets"; by Steele, in a dedication to *The Spectator;* by Tickell, to his "Homer."—*Warton.*

[3] John Gay. See p. 337.

[4] Gay died at the home of Catherine Douglas, Duchess of Queensberry, his friend and patroness.

And see what friends, and read what books I please:
Above a patron, though I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my pray'rs;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know, if Dennis be alive or dead.
 Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'ns! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
"I found him close with Swift—Indeed? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus)[1] something will come out."
'T is all in vain, deny it as I will:
"No, such a genius never can lie still";
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will[2] or Bubo[3] makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When ev'ry coxcomb knows me by my style?
 Curs'd be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-ey'd virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or beauty in distress,
Who loves a lie, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out;
That fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray;
Who to the *Dean* and *silver bell* can swear,

[1] The reference is supposed to be to the Earl of Kinnoul. He was at one time a friend of Swift and Pope, but later was as violently hated by both.
[2] Sir William Yonge (d. 1755). Pope disliked him because he prosecuted Atterbury. [3] George Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe (1691–1762).

And sees at Canons what was never there;[1]
Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie.
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus[2] tremble— *A.* What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve,[3] familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,[4]
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.
Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's fool,

[1] Meaning the man who would have persuaded the Duke of Chandos [whose estate was named Canons] that Mr. Pope meant him in those circumstances ridiculed in the Epistle on Taste.—*Pope.*

[2] John, Lord Hervey (1696–1743), second son of the Earl of Bristol. He had the office of Privy Seal under Walpole. Sporus was an effeminate favorite of the Emperor Nero. See Advertisement, n. 2.

[3] Queen Caroline, wife of George II. [4] the council board.

Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud, nor servile, be one poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways;
That flatt'ry, ev'n to kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in verse or prose the same;
That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth and moraliz'd his song;
That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
He stood[1] the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;[2]
The tale reviv'd, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,
The libel'd person, and the pictur'd shape;
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father, dead;
The whisper that, to greatness still too near,
Perhaps, yet vibrates on his Sov'reign's ear—
Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:
For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!
A. But why insult the poor, affront the great?
P. A knave's a knave, to me, in ev'ry state:
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at Court, or Japhet[3] in a jail,
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire;[4]
If on a pillory, or near a throne,
He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.
Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit;
This dreaded sat'rist Dennis will confess

[1] withstood.
[2] In a pamphlet "A Pop upon Pope," attributed to Lady Mary Montagu, Pope was said to have been set upon and beaten and to have cried from pain.
[3] Japhet Crooke, alias Sir Peter Stranger, a forger who landed in jail.
[4] Knights of the Post were ready to swear to anything for pay. Knights of the shire were members of Parliament.

Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress;
So humble he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhym'd for Moore.
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lie.[1]
To please a mistress one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:
Let Budgell charge low Grub Street on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his will.[2]
Let the two Curlls[3] of town and court, abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and Muse—
Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool;
That harmless mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!
Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in virtue, or in song.
 Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's cause,[4]
While yet in Britain honour had applause)
Each parent sprung.—*A.* What fortune, pray?
 —*P.* Their own,
And better got, than Bestia's[5] from the throne.
Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,[6]
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious through his age.
No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lie.[7]
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language, but the language of the heart.
By nature honest, by experience wise,
Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise;

[1] This man had the impudence to tell in print that Mr. Pope had occasioned a *Lady's death.—Pope.*

[2] Eustace Budgell (1686–1737), a hack-writer, forged a will as by Matthew Tindall, in which he bequeathed himself £2100.

[3] the bookseller and Lord Hervey.

[4] Two of Pope's mother's family lost their lives in the service of Charles I.

[5] The reference is supposed to be to Horace Walpole.

[6] As Addison did, Pope spitefully intimates, by his marriage with the Countess of Warwick.

[7] As a Roman Catholic he would not take the oaths of allegiance or supremacy.

His life, though long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me, thus to live, and thus to die!
Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.
O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death;
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky![1]
On cares like these if length of days attend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a queen!
A. Whether that blessing be deny'd or giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n.

(1734)

Moral Essays

Epistle II: To a Lady[2]

Of the Characters of Women

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
"Most women have no characters at all."
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.
How many pictures of one nymph we view,
All how unlike each other, all how true!
Arcadia's countess here, in ermin'd pride,
Is there Pastora by a fountain side;
Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
And there a naked Leda with a swan.
Let then the fair one beautifully cry,

[1] His mother had died June 7, 1733, but the original of these verses had been composed as early as September 3, 1731.
[2] Martha Blount (1690–1762), of whom Pope was very fond.

In Magdalen's loose hair and lifted eye,
Or, drest in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
With simp'ring angels, palms, and harps divine;
Whether the charmer sinner it, or saint it,
If folly grow romantic I must paint it.
 Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.
 Rufa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the park,
Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,
Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke[1]
As Sappho's[2] di'monds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an ev'ning mask:
So morning insects that in muck begun
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun.
 How soft is Silia! fearful to offend,
The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend:
To her Calista prov'd her conduct nice,
And good Simplicius asks of her advice.
Sudden, she storms! she raves! You tip the wink,
But spare your censure; Silia does not drink:
All eyes may see from what the change arose,
All eyes may see—a pimple on her nose.
 Papillia, wedded to her am'rous spark,
Sighs for the shades—"How charming is a park!"
A park is purchas'd, but the fair he sees
All bath'd in tears—"Oh, odious, odious trees!"
 Ladies, like variegated tulips, show;
'Tis to their changes half their charms we owe;
Fine by defect, and delicately weak,
Their happy spots[3] the nice admirer take,
'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd,
Aw'd without virtue, without beauty charm'd;

[1] John Locke (1632–1704), author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding."

[2] Lady Mary Montagu (1689–1762), up to 1722 the object of Pope's warm regard; after that date, of his still warmer hatred. She was a very brilliant woman, and she and Pope were not at all scrupulous in the choice of their satirical weapons.

[3] patches.

Her tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her eyes,
Less wit than mimic, more a wit than wise;
Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.
Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child;
Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a lover's pray'r,
And paid a tradesman once to make him stare;
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a widow happy, for a whim.
Why then declare good-nature is her scorn,
When 'tis by that alone she can be borne?
Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
A fool to pleasure, yet a slave to fame:
Now deep in Taylor[1] and the Book of Martyrs,[2]
Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres:[3]
Now conscience chills her, and now passion burns;
And atheism and religion take their turns;
A very heathen in the carnal part,
Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart.
See Sin in state, majestically drunk;
Proud as a peeress, prouder as a punk;
Chaste to her husband, frank to all beside,
A teeming mistress, but a barren bride.
What then? let blood and body bear the fault,
Her head's untouch'd, that noble seat of thought:
Such this day's doctrine—in another fit
She sins with poets through pure love of wit.
What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain?
Cæsar and Tall-boy,[4] Charles and Charlemagne.
As Helluo,[5] late dictator of the feast,
The nose of Haut-gout, and the tip of taste,
Critiqu'd your wine, and analys'd your meat,

[1] Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667), author of "Holy Living and Holy Dying."
[2] John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" (1563).
[3] His Grace is supposed to be Philip, Duke of Wharton (1698–1731). The other rascal is Francis Chartres (1675–1732), called "the greatest scoundrel of his age."
[4] Tall-boy was a foolish character in Brome's "Jovial Crew" (1652).
[5] glutton.

Yet on plain pudding deign'd at home to eat;
So Philomedé,[1] lect'ring all mankind
On the soft passion, and the taste refin'd,
Th' address, the delicacy—stoops at once,
And makes her hearty meal upon a dunce.
 Flavia's a wit, has too much sense to pray;
To toast our wants and wishes, is her way;
Nor asks of God, but of her stars, to give
The mighty blessing, "while we live, to live."
Then all for death, that opiate of the soul!
Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl.[2]
Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?
A spark too fickle, or a spouse too kind.
Wise wretch! with pleasures too refin'd to please;
With too much spirit to be e'er at ease;
With too much quickness ever to be taught;
With too much thinking to have common thought:
You purchase pain with all that joy can give,
And die of nothing but a rage to live.
 Turn then from wits; and look on Simo's mate,
No ass so meek, no ass so obstinate.
Or her, that owns her faults, but never mends,
Because she's honest, and the best of friends.
Or her, whose life the church and scandal share,
For ever in a passion, or a pray'r.
Or her, who laughs at hell, but (like her Grace)
Cries, "Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!"
Or who in sweet vicissitude appears
Of mirth and opium, ratafie[3] and tears,
The daily anodyne, and nightly draught,
To kill those foes to fair ones, time and thought.
Woman and fool are two hard things to hit;
For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.
 But what are these to great Atossa's[4] mind?

[1] The reference is supposed to be to Henrietta (1681–1733), the daughter of the Duke of Marlborough and the wife of the second Earl of Godolphin.

[2] Lucretia stabbed herself after her violation by Tarquin. "Fair Rosamond," the mistress of Henry II, in Addison's opera "Rosamond," demands the deadly bowl instead of the dagger offered her by Queen Elinor.—*Ward.*

[3] A liqueur flavored with almonds or fruit-kernels.

[4] Atossa has traits of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (1660–1744), and of the Duchess of Buckingham, natural daughter of James II.

Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind!
Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
Shines in exposing knaves, and painting fools,
Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratify'd except her rage.
So much the fury still out-ran the wit,
The pleasure miss'd her, and the scandal hit.
Who breaks with her, provokes revenge from hell,
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her ev'ry turn with violence pursu'd,
No more a storm her hate than gratitude:
To that each passion turns, or soon or late;
Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
Superiors? death! and equals? what a curse!
But an inferior not dependant? worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:
But die, and she'll adore you—Then the Bust[1]
And Temple rise—then fall again to dust.
Last night, her lord was all that's good and great;
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robb'd of pow'r, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of follow'rs! without one distress
Sick of herself through very selfishness!
Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wanders, Heav'n-directed, to the poor.

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right:

[1] The Duchess of Marlborough had erected at Blenheim a temple with a bust of Queen Anne within it, but she let it fall into decay.

For how should equal colours do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black?
—"Yet Chloe[1] sure was form'd without a spot"—
Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.
"With ev'ry pleasing, ev'ry prudent part,
Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a Heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never, reach'd one gen'rous thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in decencies for ever.
So very reasonable, so unmov'd,
As never yet to love, or to be lov'd.
She, while her lover pants upon her breast,
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
And when she sees her friend in deep despair,
Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair.
Forbid it Heav'n, a favour or a debt
She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
Safe is your secret still in Chloe's ear;
But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.
Of all her dears she never slander'd one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone.
Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her footman put it in her head.
Chloe is prudent—Would you too be wise?
Then never break your heart when Chloe dies.

One certain portrait may (I grant) be seen,
Which Heav'n has varnish'd out, and made a queen;
The same for ever! and describ'd by all
With truth and goodness, as with crown and ball.
Poets heap virtues, painters gems at will,
And shew their zeal, and hide their want of skill.
'Tis well—but, artists! who can paint or write,
To draw the naked is your true delight.
That robe of quality so struts and swells,
None see what parts of nature it conceals:
Th' exactest traits of body or of mind,
We owe to models of an humble kind.
If Queensbury[2] to strip there's no compelling,

[1] Lady Howard, Countess of Suffolk and mistress of George II.
[2] Catherine Douglas, Duchess of Queensbury, noted for her beauty (d. 1777).

'Tis from a handmaid we must take a Helen.
From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing
To draw the man who loves his God, or king:
Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
From honest Mah'met,[1] or plain Parson Hale.[2]
But grant, in public men sometimes are shown,
A woman's seen in private life alone:
Our bolder talents in full light display'd;
Your virtues open fairest in the shade.
Bred to disguise, in public 'tis you hide;
There, none distinguish 'twixt your shame or pride,
Weakness or delicacy; all so nice,
That each may seem a virtue, or a vice.
In men, we various ruling passions find;
In women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The love of pleasure, and the love of sway.
That, Nature gives; and where the lesson taught
Is but to please, can pleasure seem a fault?
Experience, this; by man's oppression curst,
They seek the second not to lose the first.
Men, some to bus'ness, some to pleasure take;
But ev'ry woman is at heart a rake:
Men, some to quiet, some to public strife;
But ev'ry lady would be queen for life.
Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens!
Pow'r all their end, but beauty all the means:
In youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their age:
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam;
No thought of peace or happiness at home.
But wisdom's triumph is well-tim'd retreat,
As hard a science to the fair as great!
Beauties, like tyrants, old and friendless grown,
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,
Worn out in public, weary ev'ry eye,
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die.

[1] Mahomet, a servant of George I, said to have been the son of a Turkish pasha.

[2] Stephen Hales (1677–1761), a man of considerable reputation as a physiologist. He was vicar of Teddington, Middlesex, and was a near neighbor of Pope's.

Pleasures the sex, as children birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost:
At last, to follies youth could scarce defend,
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;
Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more:
As hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spite,
So these their merry, miserable night;
Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their honour dy'd.
See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend;
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot;
Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!
Ah! Friend! to dazzle let the vain design;
To raise the thought and touch the heart, be thine!
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the Ring,
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing:
So when the sun's broad beam has tir'd the sight,
All mild ascends the moon's more sober light,
Serene in virgin modesty she shines,
And unobserv'd the glaring orb declines.
Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She, who can love a sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
She, who ne'er answers till a husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shews she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys;
Let fops or fortune fly which way they will;
Disdains all loss of tickets, or codille;
Spleen, vapours, or small-pox, above them all,
And mistress of herself, though china fall.
And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a contradiction still.
Heav'n, when it strives to polish all it can

Its last best work, but forms a softer man;
Picks from each sex, to make the fav'rite blest,
Your love of pleasure, our desire of rest:
Blends, in exception to all gen'ral rules,
Your taste of follies, with our scorn of fools:
Reserve with frankness, art with truth ally'd,
Courage with softness, modesty with pride;
Fix'd principles, with fancy ever new;
Shakes all together, and produces—You.

Be this a woman's fame: with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and queens may die a jest.
This Phœbus promis'd (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first open'd on the sphere;
Ascendant Phœbus watch'd that hour with care,
Averted half your parents' simple pray'r;
And gave you beauty, but deny'd the pelf
That buys your sex a tyrant o'er itself.
The gen'rous God, who wit and gold refines,
And ripens spirits as he ripens mines,
Kept dross for duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave sense, good-humour, and a poet.

(1735)

The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace: to Augustus[1]

ADVERTISEMENT

THE reflections of Horace, and the judgments passed in his Epistle to Augustus, seemed so seasonable to the present times, that I could not help applying them to the use of my own country. The author thought them considerable enough to address them to his Prince, whom he paints with all the great and good qualities of a Monarch upon whom the Romans depended for the increase of an absolute empire. But to make the poem entirely English, I was willing to add one or two of those which contribute to the happiness of a free people, and are more consistent with the welfare of our neighbours.

This Epistle will show the learned world to have fallen into two mistakes: one, that Augustus was a patron of poets in general;

[1] George Augustus came to the throne as George II in 1727 and reigned till 1760.

whereas he not only prohibited all but the best writers to name him, but recommended that care even to the civil magistrate: *Admonebat Prætores, ne paterentur Nomen suum obsolefieri*, etc. The other, that this piece was only a general discourse of poetry; whereas it was an apology for the poets, in order to render Augustus more their patron. Horace here pleads the cause of his contemporaries, first, against the taste of the town, whose humour it was to magnify the authors of the preceding age; secondly, against the court and nobility, who encouraged only the writers for the theatre; and lastly, against the Emperor himself, who had conceived them of little use to the government.

He shews (by a view of the progress of learning, and the change of taste among the Romans) that the introduction of the polite arts of Greece had given the writers of his time great advantages over their predecessors; that their morals were much improved, and the licence of those ancient poets restrained; that satire and comedy were become more just and useful; that whatever extravagances were left on the stage were owing to the *ill taste* of the *nobility;* that poets, under due regulations, were in many respects useful to the state, and concludes, that it was upon them the emperor himself must depend for his fame with posterity.

We may further learn from this Epistle that Horace made his court to this Great Prince by writing with a decent freedom toward him, with a just contempt of his low flatterers and with a manly regard to his own character.

While you, great patron of mankind![1] sustain
The balanc'd world, and open all the main;[2]
Your country, chief, in arms abroad defend,
At home, with morals, arts, and laws amend;
How shall the Muse, from such a monarch, steal
An hour, and not defraud the public weal?
Edward and Henry,[3] now the boast of fame,
And virtuous Alfred,[4] a more sacred name,
After a life of gen'rous toils endur'd,
The Gaul subdu'd, or property secur'd,
Ambition humbled, mighty cities storm'd,
Or laws establish'd, and the world reform'd;

[1] The tone throughout the satire is ironic.

[2] By the treaty of 1668, the Spaniards had the right of searching merchant vessels for contraband goods, and the manner in which they exercised the right provoked the liveliest indignation in England.—*Elwin.* Actually, the main was kept open for the Spaniards.

[3] Edward III and Henry V. [4] Alfred the Great, who reigned 871–901.

Clos'd their long glories with a sigh, to find
Th' unwilling gratitude of base mankind!
All human virtue, to its latest breath,
Finds envy never conquer'd, but by death.
The great Alcides, ev'ry labour past,
Had still this monster to subdue at last.
Sure fate of all, beneath whose rising ray
Each star of meaner merit fades away!
Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat,
Those suns of glory please not till they set.
To thee, the world its present homage pays,
The harvest early, but mature the praise:
Great friend of Liberty! in kings a name
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame:
Whose word is truth, as sacred and rever'd,
As Heav'n's own oracles from altars heard.
Wonder of Kings! like whom, to mortal eyes
None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall rise.
Just in one instance, be it yet confest
Your people, Sir, are partial in the rest:
Foes to all living worth except your own,
And advocates for folly dead and gone.
Authors, like coins, grow dear as they grow old;
It is the rust we value, not the gold.
Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learn'd by rote,
And beastly Skelton[1] heads of houses quote:
One likes no language but the Faery Queen;
A Scot will fight for Christ's Kirk o' the Green:[2]
And each true Briton is to Ben[3] so civil,
He swears the Muses met him at the Devil.
Tho' justly Greece her eldest sons admires,
Why should not we be wiser than our sires?
In ev'ry public virtue we excel:
We build, we paint, we sing, we dance as well,
And learned Athens to our art must stoop,
Could she behold us tumbling thro' a hoop.
If time improve our wit as well as wine,

[1] John Skelton (1460–1529), a bitter satirist of Cardinal Wolsey. In contrast to Pope, Erasmus called him "*Britannicarum literarum lumen et decus.*"
[2] A piece of rollicking verse attributed to James I of Scotland.
[3] Ben Jonson (1573–1637) presided over the Apollo Club at the Devil Tavern in Cheapside.

Say at what age a Poet grows divine?
Shall we, or shall we not, account him so,
Who dy'd, perhaps, an hundred years ago?
End all dispute; and fix the year precise
When British bards begin t'immortalize?
"Who lasts a century can have no flaw,
I hold that wit a classic, good in law."
Suppose he wants a year, will you compound?
And shall we deem him ancient, right and sound,
Or damn to all eternity at once,
At ninety-nine, a modern and a dunce?
"We shall not quarrel for a year or two;
By courtesy of England,[1] he may do."
Then, by the rule that made the horse-tail bare,
I pluck out year by year, as hair by hair,
And melt down ancients like a heap of snow:
While you, to measure merits, look in Stowe,[2]
And estimating authors by the year,
Bestow a garland only on a bier.
Shakespear (whom you and ev'ry play-house bill
Style the divine, the matchless, what you will)
For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.
Ben, old and poor, as little seem'd to heed
The life to come, in ev'ry poet's creed.
Who now reads Cowley[3]? if he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.
"Yet surely, surely, these were famous men!
What boy but hears the sayings of old Ben?
In all debates where critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's Art,
Of Shakespear's Nature, and of Cowley's Wit;

[1] Courtesy of England is restricted in law to the single case of not disturbing the husband in the enjoyment, for his life, of his wife's estate after her death. Pope applies it loosely to the case of not disturbing the claim of a poet to rank as a classic where a prescriptive title of a full century could not be made out.—*Pattison.*

[2] John Stowe (c.1525–1605), author of "Annals or General Chronicle of England," makes no mention of literary events.

[3] Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), author of the epic "The Davideis" and of "Pindaric Odes."

How Beaumont's judgment check'd what Fletcher writ;[1]
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow;[2]
But, for the passions, Southern sure and Rowe.[3]
These, only these, support the crowded stage,
From eldest Heywood[4] down to Cibber's age."
All this may be; the people's voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.
To Gammer Gurton[5] if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careless Husband[6] praise,
Or say our fathers never broke a rule;
Why then, I say, the public is a fool.
But let them own, that greater faults than we
They had, and greater virtues, I'll agree.
Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman feet:[7]
Milton's strong pinion now not Heav'n can bound,
Now serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground,
In quibbles, angel and archangel join,
And God the Father turns a school-divine.
Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
Like slashing Bentley with his desp'rate hook,[8]
Or damn all Shakespear, like th' affected fool
At court, who hates whate'er he read at school.
But for the wits of either Charles's days,
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease;
Sprat,[9] Carew,[10] Sedley,[11] and a hundred more,
(Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies[12] o'er)

[1] Francis Beaumont (1584–1616) and John Fletcher (1579–1625) collaborated in the writing of plays.

[2] Shadwell (See Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe"); William Wycherley (c.1640–1716), the frankest of the Restoration dramatists.

[3] Thomas Southern (1660–1746), author of the play "Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave"; Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), author of "Jane Shore."

[4] John Heywood (c.1497–c.1580), author of farcical interludes.

[5] "Gammer Gurton's Needle" (c.1566), an early English comedy.

[6] a comedy by Colley Cibber.

[7] Sidney's imitations of Latin verse met with no success.

[8] The reference may be, as Warburton suggests, to the hooks or brackets which enclosed what Bentley regarded as spurious in the text of "Paradise Lost."

[9] Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester (1635–1713), whom Pope called a "worse Cowley."

[10] Thomas Carew (c.1598–c.1639), a better lyrist than the other two.

[11] Charles Sedley (1639–1701), a dramatist and lyrist.

[12] anthologies of contemporary verse.

One simile, that solitary shines
In the dry desert of a thousand lines,
Or lengthen'd thought that gleams through many a page,
Has sanctify'd whole poems for an age.
I lose my patience, and I own it too,
When works are censur'd, not as bad but new;
While if our elders break all reason's laws,
These fools demand not pardon, but applause.
On Avon's bank, where flow'rs eternal blow,
If I but ask, if any weed can grow?
One tragic sentence if I dare deride,
Which Betterton's[1] grave action dignify'd,
Or well-mouth'd Booth[2] with emphasis proclaims
(Tho' but, perhaps, a muster-roll of names),
How will our fathers rise up in a rage,
And swear, all shame is lost in George's age!
You'd think no fools disgrac'd the former reign,
Did not some grave examples yet remain,
Who scorn a lad should teach his father skill,
And, having once been wrong, will be so still.
He, who to seem more deep than you or I,
Extols old bards, or Merlin's prophecy,[3]
Mistake him not; he envies, not admires,
And to debase the sons, exalts the sires.
Had ancient times conspir'd to disallow
What then was new, what had been ancient now?
Or what remain'd, so worthy to be read
By learned critics, of the mighty dead?
In days of ease, when now the weary sword
Was sheath'd, and luxury with Charles restor'd;
In ev'ry taste of foreign courts improv'd,
"All, by the King's example, liv'd and lov'd."
Then peers grew proud in horsemanship t'excel,
Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell;
The soldier breath'd the gallantries of France,
And ev'ry flow'ry courtier writ romance.
Then marble, soften'd into life, grew warm,

[1] Thomas Betterton (c.1635–1710), a great tragic actor.
[2] Barton Booth (1681–1733), another great tragedian of the period.
[3] A translation of the so-called "Prophecies of Merlin" had been published by Thomas Heywood in 1641.—*Courthope.*

And yielding metal flow'd to human form:
Lely[1] on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul.
No wonder then, when all was love and sport,
The willing Muses were debauch'd at court:
On each enervate string they taught the note
To pant, or tremble thro' an eunuch's throat.[2]
But Britain, changeful as a child at play,
Now calls in princes, and now turns away:
Now Whig, now Tory, what we lov'd we hate;
Now all for pleasure, now for Church and State;
Now for prerogative, and now for laws;
Effects unhappy! from a noble cause.
Time was, a sober Englishman would knock
His servants up, and rise by five o'clock,
Instruct his family in ev'ry rule,
And send his wife to church, his son to school.
To worship like his fathers was his care;
To teach their frugal virtues to his heir;
To prove, that luxury could never hold;
And place, on good security, his gold.
Now times are chang'd, and one poetic itch
Has seiz'd the court and city, poor and rich:
Sons, sires, and grandsires, all will wear the bays,
Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays,
To theatres, and to rehearsals throng,
And all our grace at table is a song.
I, who so oft renounce the Muses, lie,
Not ———'s self e'er tells more fibs than I;
When sick of Muse, our follies we deplore,
And promise our best friends to rhyme no more;
We wake next morning in a raging fit,
And call for pen and ink to show our wit.
He serv'd a 'prenticeship who sets up shop;
Ward[3] try'd on puppies and the poor, his drop;

[1] Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), painter of court beauties.
[2] The Siege of Rhodes, by Sir William Davenant, the first opera sung in England.—*Pope.*
[3] Joshua Ward (1685–1761), "a famous empiric, whose pill and drop had several surprising effects" (*Pope*).

Ev'n Radcliffe's doctors travel first to France,[1]
Nor dare to practise till they've learn'd to dance.
Who builds a bridge that never drove a pile?
(Should Ripley[2] venture, all the world would smile)
But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man.
Yet, Sir, reflect, the mischief is not great;
These madmen never hurt the Church or State:
Sometimes the folly benefits mankind;
And rarely av'rice taints the tuneful mind.
Allow him but his plaything of a pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:
Flight of cashiers, or mobs, he'll never mind;
And knows no losses while the Muse is kind.
To cheat a friend, or ward, he leaves to Peter;[3]
The good man heaps up nothing but mere metre,
Enjoys his garden and his book in quiet;
And then—a perfect hermit in his diet.
Of little use the man you may suppose,
Who says in verse what others say in prose;
Yet let me show, a poet's of some weight,
And (tho' no soldier) useful to the State.
What will a child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a foreigner the tongue?
What's long or short, each accent where to place,
And speak in public with some sort of grace.
I scarce can think him such a worthless thing,
Unless he praise some monster of a king;
Or virtue, or religion turn to sport,
To please a lewd, or unbelieving Court.
Unhappy Dryden!—In all Charles's days,
Roscommon[4] only boasts unspotted bays;
And in our own (excuse some courtly stains)
No whiter page than Addison remains.

[1] John Radcliffe (1650–1714), founder of the Radcliffe fellowship in medicine at Oxford. The fellows must spend half their time in traveling "in parts beyond sea for their better improvement."

[2] Thomas Ripley (d.1758), an architect, whom Pope disliked as in favor with the government.

[3] Peter Walter (1662–1745). The reference may be to George Pitt, whose estates were a source of much revenue to his Steward, Peter Walter.—*Bowles.*

[4] See "Essay on Criticism," l. 725, n.

He, from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
And sets the passions on the side of truth,
Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
And pours each human virtue in the heart.
Let Ireland tell, how wit upheld her cause,
Her trade supported, and supplied her laws;
And leave on Swift this grateful verse engrav'd,
"The Rights a Court attack'd, a Poet sav'd."[1]
Behold the hand that wrought a nation's cure,
Stretch'd to relieve the idiot and the poor,[2]
Proud Vice to brand, or injur'd Worth adorn,
And stretch the ray to ages yet unborn.
Not but there are, who merit other palms;
Hopkins and Sternhold glad the heart with Psalms:[3]
The boys and girls whom charity maintains,
Implore your help in these pathetic strains:
How could devotion touch the country pews,
Unless the gods bestow'd a proper Muse?
Verse cheers their leisure, verse assists their work,
Verse prays for peace, or sings down Pope and Turk.
The silenc'd preacher yields to potent strain,
And feels that grace his pray'r besought in vain;
The blessing thrills thro' all the lab'ring throng,
And Heav'n is won by violence of song.
Our rural ancestors, with little blest,
Patient of labour when the end was rest,
Indulg'd the day that hous'd their annual grain,
With feasts, and off'ring, and a thankful strain:
The joy their wives, their sons, and servants share,
Ease of their toil, and partners of their care:
The laugh, the jest, attendants on the bowl,
Smooth'd ev'ry brow, and open'd ev'ry soul:
With growing years the pleasing licence grew,
And taunts alternate innocently flew.
But times corrupt, and nature, ill-inclin'd,
Produc'd the point that left a sting behind;

[1] The references are to Swift's pamphlet, "A Proposal for the Use of Irish Manufactures" and to the "Drapier's Letters."

[2] A foundation for the maintenance of idiots, and a fund for assisting the poor by lending small sums of money on demand.—*Pope.*

[3] Hopkins and Sternhold composed a metrical version of the Psalms, which appeared in 1549 and became immensely popular.

Till friend with friend, and families at strife,
Triumphant malice rag'd thro' private life.
Who felt the wrong, or fear'd it, took th' alarm,
Appeal'd to law, and justice lent her arm.
At length, by wholesome dread of statutes bound,
The poets learn'd to please, and not to wound:
Most warp'd to flatt'ry's side; but some, more nice,
Preserv'd the freedom, and forbore the vice.
Hence satire rose, that just the medium hit,
And heals with morals what it hurts with wit.
We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms;
Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow.
Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.
Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein
And splay-foot verse remain'd, and will remain.
Late, very late, correctness grew our care,
When the tir'd nation breath'd from civil war.
Exact Racine, and Corneille's noble fire,
Show'd us that France had something to admire.
Not but the tragic spirit was our own,
And full in Shakespear, fair in Otway[1] shone:
But Otway fail'd to polish or refine,
And fluent Shakespear scarce effac'd a line.
Ev'n copious Dryden wanted, or forgot,
The last and greatest art, the art to blot.
Some doubt, if equal pains, or equal fire
The humbler Muse of comedy require.
But in known images of life, I guess
The labour greater, as th' indulgence less.
Observe how seldom ev'n the best succeed:
Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed?
What pert, low dialogue has Farqu'ar[2] writ!
How Van[3] wants grace, who never wanted wit!

[1] Thomas Otway (1652–1685), author of "Venice Preserved."
[2] George Farquhar (1678–1707), author of "The Beaux' Stratagem."
[3] Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726), dramatist and architect.

The stage how loosely does Astræa[1] tread,
Who fairly puts all characters to bed!
And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,
To make poor Pinky[2] eat with vast applause!
But fill their purse, our poet's work is done,
Alike to them, by pathos or by pun.

O you! whom vanity's light bark conveys
On fame's mad voyage by the wind of praise,
With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
For ever sunk too low, or borne too high!
Who pants for glory finds but short repose,
A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows.
Farewell the stage! if just as thrives the play,
The silly bard grows fat, or falls away.

There still remains, to mortify a wit,
The many-headed monster of the pit:
A senseless, worthless, and unhonour'd crowd;
Who, to disturb their betters mighty proud,
Clatt'ring their sticks before ten lines are spoke,
Call for the farce, the bear, or the black-joke.[3]
What dear delight to Britons farce affords!
Ever the taste of mobs, but now of lords;
(Taste, that eternal wanderer, which flies
From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes.)
The play stands still; damn action and discourse,
Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and horse;
Pageants on pageants, in long order drawn,
Peers, heralds, bishops, ermine, gold, and lawn;
The Champion too! and, to complete the jest,
Old Edward's armour beams on Cibber's breast.
With laughter sure Democritus had dy'd,[4]
Had he beheld an audience gape so wide.
Let bear or elephant be e'er so white,
The people, sure, the people are the sight!
Ah luckless poet! stretch thy lungs and roar,
That bear or elephant shall heed thee more;

[1] Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640–1689), novelist and dramatist.

[2] William Penketham, a comic actor who in the character of Don Lewis, in "Love Makes a Man," ate two chickens in three seconds!—*Pattison.*

[3] "The Coal-black Joke" was a vulgar song.

[4] Because he laughed at the follies of men, Democritus (460–375 B.C.) was called the laughing philosopher.

While all its throats the gallery extends,
And all the thunder of the pit ascends!
Loud as the wolves, on Orcas' stormy steep,[1]
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep.
Such is the shout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat;[2]
Or when from Court a birth-day suit bestow'd,
Sinks the lost actor in the tawdry load.
Booth enters—hark! the universal peal!
"But has he spoken?" Not a syllable.
What shook the stage, and made the people stare?
Cato's long wig, flow'r'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.
Yet lest you think I rally more than teach,
Or praise malignly arts I cannot reach,
Let me for once presume t'instruct the times,
To know the poet from the man of rhymes:
'Tis he, who gives my breast a thousand pains,
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art,
With pity, and with terror tear my heart;
And snatch me, o'er the earth, or thro' the air,
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.
But not this part of the poetic state
Alone, deserves the favour of the great:
Think of those authors, Sir, who would rely
More on a reader's sense, than gazer's eye.
Or who shall wander where the Muses sing?
Who climb their mountain, or who taste their spring?
How shall we fill a library with wit,
When Merlin's Cave is half unfurnish'd yet?[3]
My Liege! why writers little claim your thought,
I guess; and, with their leave, will tell the fault:
We poets are (upon a poet's word)
Of all mankind, the creatures most absurd:

[1] The farthest northern promontory of Scotland, opposite to the Orcades.—*Pope.*

[2] James Quin (1693–1766), a tragedian succeeding Booth; and Anne Oldfield (1683–1730), a famous actress.

[3] "Queen Caroline ordered a cave to be erected at Richmond . . . , to which she gave the name of Merlin's Cave [*The British Chronologist*, June 10, 1735], where," remarks Pope ironically, "there is a small but choice collection of books." His own were not of the number.

The season, when to come, and when to go,
To sing, or cease to sing, we never know;
And if we will recite nine hours in ten,
You lose your patience, just like other men.
Then too we hurt ourselves, when to defend
A single verse, we quarrel with a friend;
Repeat unask'd; lament, the wit's too fine
For vulgar eyes, and point out ev'ry line.
But most, when straining with too weak a wing,
We needs will write epistles to the King;
And from the moment we oblige the town,
Expect a place, or pension from the Crown;
Or dubb'd historians by express command,
T'enroll your triumphs o'er the seas and land,
Be call'd to Court to plan some work divine,
As once for Louis, Boileau and Racine.

Yet think, great Sir! (so many virtues shown)
Ah think, what poet best may make them known?
Or choose at least some Minister of Grace,
Fit to bestow the Laureate's weighty place.[1]

Charles, to late times to be transmitted fair,
Assign'd his figure to Bernini's care;[2]
And great Nassau to Kneller's hand decreed[3]
To fix him graceful on the bounding steed;
So well in paint and stone they judg'd of merit:
But kings in wit may want discerning spirit.
The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore,[4] and one pension'd Quarles;[5]
Which made old Ben, and surly Dennis swear,
"No Lord's anointed, but a Russian bear."

Not with such majesty, such bold relief,
The forms august, of king, or conqu'ring chief,
E'er swell'd on marble; as in verse have shin'd
(In polish'd verse) the manners and the mind.

[1] Cibber was appointed poet laureate by Walpole in 1730.
[2] Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) modelled a bust of Charles I.
[3] Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723) painted an equestrian portrait of William III.
[4] Sir Richard Blackmore (d.1729) was knighted by William III in 1697 as a physician, not as a poet. He composed long epics while driving to and from his patients.
[5] Francis Quarles (1592–1644), author of the "Emblems." There is no record of a pension.

Oh! could I mount on the Mæonian wing,[1]
Your arms, your actions, your repose to sing!
What seas you travers'd, and what fields you fought!
Your country's peace, how oft, how dearly bought!
How barb'rous rage subsided at your word,
And nations wonder'd while they dropp'd the sword!
How, when you nodded, o'er the land and deep,
Peace stole her wing, and wrapt the world in sleep;
Till earth's extremes your mediation own,
And Asia's tyrants tremble at your throne—
But verse, alas! your Majesty disdains;
And I'm not us'd to panegyric strains:
The zeal of fools offends at any time,
But most of all, the zeal of fools in rhyme.
Besides, a fate attends on all I write,
That when I aim at praise, they say I bite.
A vile encomium doubly ridicules:
There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools.
If true, a woeful likeness; and if lies,
"Praise undeserv'd is scandal in disguise":
Well may he blush, who gives it, or receives;
And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
(Like journals, odes, and such forgotten things
As Eusden,[2] Philips, Settle,[3] writ of kings)
Clothe spice, line trunks, or flutt'ring in a row,
Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho.[4]

(1737)

[1] Homeric.
[2] Laurence Eusden (1688-1730), poet laureate before Cibber.
[3] Elkanah Settle (1648–1724), a poor poet.
[4] Soho is Wardour Street, originally called "Old Soho," and had already begun to acquire a connection with old curiosities.—*Courthope.*

The Dunciad

BOOK I

THE mighty mother, and her son,[1] who brings
The Smithfield Muses[2] to the ear of kings,
I sing. Say you, her instruments the great!
Call'd to this work by Dulness, Jove, and Fate,
You by whose care, in vain decry'd and curst,
Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first,
Say how the goddess bade Britannia sleep,
And pour'd her spirit o'er the land and deep.
In eldest time, ere mortals writ or read,
Ere Pallas issu'd from the Thund'rer's head,
Dulness o'er all possess'd her ancient right,
Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night:
Fate in their dotage this fair idiot gave,
Gross as her sire, and as her mother grave,
Laborious, heavy, busy, bold, and blind,
She rul'd, in native anarchy, the mind.
Still her old empire to restore she tries,
For, born a goddess, Dulness never dies.
Oh thou! whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver!
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rab'lais' easy chair,
Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
Or thy griev'd country's copper chains unbind;[3]
From thy Bœotia[4] though her pow'r retires,
Mourn not, my Swift, at aught our realm acquires.
Here pleas'd behold her mighty wings outspread

[1] Dulness was in the first edition the mother of Lewis Theobald (1688–1744), and in the edition of 1743, of Colley Cibber (1671–1757).

[2] Smithfield is the place where Bartholemew Fair was kept, whose shows, machines, and dramatical entertainments, formerly agreeable only to the taste of the rabble, were, by the hero of this poem and others of equal genius, brought to the theatres of Covent Garden, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the Haymarket, to be the reigning pleasures of the court and town.—*Pope.*

[3] Dean Swift wrote "Drapier's Letters"; as Isaac Bickerstaff he lampooned Partridge for his almanac; and he was the author of "Gulliver's Travels." He was ironical like Cervantes in "Gulliver" and was Rabelaisian in "A Tale of a Tub."

[4] Ireland.

To hatch a new Saturnian age of lead.[1]
Close to those walls where Folly holds her throne,
And laughs to think Monroe[2] would take her down,
Where o'er the gates, by his fam'd father's hand,
Great Cibber's[3] brazen brainless brothers stand;
One cell there is, conceal'd from vulgar eye,
The cave of Poverty and Poetry.[4]
Keen, hollow winds howl through the bleak recess,
Emblem of music caus'd by emptiness.
Hence bards, like Proteus long in vain ty'd down,
Escape in monsters, and amaze the town.
Hence Miscellanies spring, the weekly boast
Of Curll's chaste press and Lintot's rubric post;[5]
Hence hymning Tyburn's elegiac lines,[6]
Hence Journals, Medleys, Merc'ries, Magazines,
Sepulchral lies, our holy walls to grace,[7]
And new-year odes, and all the Grub-street race.
In clouded majesty here Dulness shone;
Four guardian Virtues, round, support her throne:
Fierce champion Fortitude, that knows no fears
Of hisses, blows, or want, or loss of ears;
Calm Temperance, whose blessings those partake
Who hunger, and who thirst for scribbling sake;
Prudence, whose glass presents th' approaching jail;
Poetic Justice, with her lifted scale,
Where, in nice balance, truth with gold she weighs,
And solid pudding against empty praise.
Here she beholds the chaos dark and deep,
Where nameless somethings in their causes sleep,
Till genial Jacob, or a warm third day

[1] The old Saturnian age was one of gold.

[2] Dr. Monroe was one of the doctors in Bedlam Hospital.

[3] Caius Gabriel Cibber, father of Colley. "The two statues of the lunatics over the gates of Bedlam Hospital were done by him, and (as his son justly says of them) are no ill monuments of his fame as an artist" (*Pope*). The statues were, however, of stone, not of brass.

[4] Theobald was the author of a poem called "The Cave of Poverty."

[5] Curll had been fined for publishing obscene books; Lintot usually adorned his shop with titles in red letters.—*Pope.* But neither published Miscellanies as periodicals.—*Courthope.*

[6] It is an ancient English custom for the malefactors to sing a psalm at their execution at Tyburn; and no less customary to print elegies on their deaths, at the same time, or before.—*Pope.*

[7] epitaphs on the walls of churches.

Call forth each mass, a poem or a play:[1]
How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
Maggots, half form'd, in rhyme exactly meet,
And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes,
And ductile Dulness new meanders takes;
There motley images her fancy strike,
Figures ill pair'd, and similes unlike.
She sees a mob of metaphors advance,
Pleas'd with the madness of the mazy dance;
How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;
How Time himself stands still at her command,
Realms shift their place, and ocean turns to land,
Here gay Description Egypt glads with show'rs,
Or gives to Zembla fruits, to Barca flow'rs;
Glitt'ring with ice here hoary hills are seen,
There painted valleys of eternal green;
In cold December fragrant chaplets blow,
And heavy harvests nod beneath the snow.
 All these, and more, the cloud-compelling queen
Beholds through fogs, that magnify the scene.
She, tinsel'd o'er in robes of varying hues,
With self-applause her wild creation views;
Sees momentary monsters rise and fall,
And with her own fools-colours gilds them all.
 'T was on the day, when * * rich and grave,
Like Cimon,[2] triumph'd both on land and wave:
(Pomps without guilt, of bloodless swords and maces,
Glad chains, warm furs, broad banners, and broad faces)
Now night descending, the proud scene was o'er,
But liv'd in Settle's numbers one day more.[3]
Now may'rs and shrieves all hush'd and satiate lay,
Yet ate, in dreams, the custard of the day;
While pensive poets painful vigils keep,

[1] Jacob Tonson (1656?–1736), the publisher. On the third day of the performance of a play the author got all the profits.

[2] The Athenian general Cimon (d.449 B.C.) obtained on one day victories over the Persians by sea and land.

[3] Elkanah Settle, as poet of the City of London, had to write panegyrics and verses to be spoken in the Pageants.—*Pope.*

Sleepless themselves to give their readers sleep.
Much to the mindful queen the feast recalls
What city swans once sung within the walls;
Much she revolves their arts, their ancient praise,
And sure succession down from Heywood's days.[1]
She saw, with joy, the line immortal run,
Each sire imprest and glaring in his son;
So watchful bruin forms, with plastic care,
Each growing lump, and brings it to a bear.[2]
She saw old Prynne in restless Daniel shine,[3]
And Eusden eke out Blackmore's endless line;[4]
She saw slow Philips creep like Tate's poor page,[5]
And all the mighty mad in Dennis[6] rage.
In each she marks her image full exprest,
But chief in Bays's[7] monster-breeding breast;
Bays, formed by nature stage and town to bless,
And act, and be, a coxcomb with success.
Dulness with transport eyes the lively dunce,
Rememb'ring she herself was Pertness once.
Now (shame to Fortune!) an ill run at play
Blank'd his bold visage, and a thin third day:
Swearing and supperless the hero sate,
Blasphem'd his gods, the dice, and damn'd his fate;
Then gnaw'd his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
Yet wrote and flounder'd on, in mere despair.
Round him much embryo, much abortion lay,
Much future ode, and abdicated play;

[1] John Heywood, whose interludes were printed in the time of Henry VIII. —*Pope.*
Thomas Heywood (d.c.1650) was the City poet.

[2] The popular belief was that mother bears licked their formless cubs into shape.

[3] William Prynne (1600–1669), author of "Histriomastix," for the writing of which he was sentenced to stand twice in the pillory and lose an ear each time; hence he is linked with Daniel Defoe, who stood in the pillory but without loss of an ear.

[4] Both poor poets. See "Ep. to Dr. Arbuthnot," l. 15, n.; "To Augustus," l. 387, n.

[5] Ambrose Philips, author of the pastorals. Nahum Tate, poet laureate, "a cold writer, of no invention" (*Pope*).

[6] John Dennis, one of Pope's special enemies. See "Essay on Criticism," l. 270, n.

[7] Colley Cibber, because he wore the bays of the laureateship.

Nonsense precipitate, like running lead,
That slipp'd through cracks and zigzags of the head;
All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
Fruits of dull heat, and sooterkins[1] of wit.
Next, o'er his books his eyes began to roll,
In pleasing memory of all he stole,
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug,
And suck'd all o'er, like an industrious bug.
Here lay poor Fletcher's half-eat scenes,[2] and here
The frippery of crucify'd Molière;[3]
There hapless Shakespear, yet of Tibbald sore,[4]
Wish'd he had blotted for himself before.
The rest on outside merit but presume,
Or serve (like other fools) to fill a room;
Such with their shelves as due proportion hold,
Or their fond parents drest in red and gold;
Or where the pictures for the page atone,
And Quarles is sav'd by beauties not his own;[5]
Here swells the shelf with Ogilby the great;[6]
There, stamp'd with arms, Newcastle shines complete;[7]
Here all his suff'ring brotherhood retire,
And 'scape the martyrdom of jakes and fire:
A Gothic library! of Greece and Rome
Well purg'd, and worthy Settle, Banks, and Broome.[8]
But, high above, more solid learning shone,
The classics of an age that heard of none;
There Caxton slept, with Wynkyn at his side,[9]

[1] An imaginary kind of afterbirth formerly attributed to Dutch women.—*N.E.D.* Hence as applied to literary composition "of a supplementary or imperfect character" (*N.E.D.*).

[2] Cibber's "Cæsar in Egypt" was based on Fletcher's "False One."

[3] Cibber's "*Non-Juror*" was borrowed from Molière's "Tartuffe"

[4] The reference is to Theobald's edition of Shakspere.

[5] As in the edition of his "Emblems" (1635), which had some fine engravings.

[6] John Ogilby (1600–76) published his translation of the "Iliad" in 1660 and of the "Odyssey" in 1665 in fine, large, illustrated editions.

[7] Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, (c. 1624–1674), the author of thirteen folio volumes, ten of which are in print.—*Courthope.*

[8] Pope says he mentioned these three authors as parallel to his hero in three capacities: (a) Settle was his brother laureate, (b) Banks was his rival in tragedy, (c) Broome was a serving man of Ben Jonson and once picked up a comedy from his betters, not entirely contemptible.

[9] Caxton, a printer in the time of Edward IV, Richard III, and Henry VII; Wynkyn de Word, his successor, in that of Henry VII and Henry VIII.—*Pope.*

One clasp'd in wood, and one in strong cow-hide;
There, sav'd by spice, like mummies, many a year,
Dry bodies of divinity appear:
De Lyra there a dreadful front extends,[1]
And here the groaning shelves Philemon bends.[2]
 Of these twelve volumes, twelve of amplest size,
Redeem'd from tapers and defrauded pies,
Inspir'd he seizes: these an altar raise:
A hecatomb of pure, unsully'd lays
That altar crowns: a folio Common-place[3]
Founds the whole pile, of all his works the base:
Quartos, octavos, shape the less'ning pyre;
A twisted birth-day ode completes the spire.
 Then he: "Great tamer of all human art!
First in my care, and ever at my heart;
Dulness! whose good old cause I yet defend,
With whom my Muse began, with whom shall end,
E'er since Sir Fopling's periwig was praise,[4]
To the last honours of the butt and bays:[5]
O thou! of bus'ness the directing soul!
To this our head, like bias to the bowl,
Which, as more pond'rous, made its aim more true,
Obliquely waddling to the mark in view:
O! ever gracious to perplex'd mankind,
Still spread a healing mist before the mind;
And, lest we err by wit's wild dancing light,
Secure us kindly in our native night.
Or, if to wit a coxcomb make pretence,
Guard the sure barrier between that and sense;
Or quite unravel all the reas'ning thread,
And hang some curious cobweb in its stead!
As, forc'd from wind-guns, lead itself can fly,
And pond'rous slugs cut swiftly through the sky;
As clocks to weight their nimble motion owe,

[1] Nicholas de Lyra or Harpsfield, a very voluminous commentator in the reigns of Henry VIII, Mary, and Elizabeth. He died in 1583.
[2] Philemon Holland (1552–1637), a voluminous translator.
[3] A huge scrap book containing passages from other authors and therefore the base of all Cibber's works.
[4] The reference is to the "fair flaxen full-bottomed periwig," which Cibber wore in his first play of "The Fool of Fashion."—*Pope.*
[5] The butt of sack and the laurel wreath that went with the laureateship.

The wheels above urg'd by the load below;
Me emptiness, and dulness could inspire,
And were my elasticity, and fire.
Some demon stole my pen (forgive th' offence),
And once betray'd me into common sense;[1]
Else all my prose and verse were much the same;
This, prose on stilts; that, poetry fall'n lame.
Did on the stage my fops appear confin'd?
My life gave ampler lessons to mankind.
Did the dead letter unsuccessful prove?
The brisk example never fail'd to move.
Yet sure, had Heav'n decreed to save the state,
Heav'n had decreed these works a longer date.
Could Troy be sav'd by any single hand,
This grey-goose weapon must have made her stand.
What can I now? My Fletcher cast aside,
Take up the Bible, once my better guide?
Or tread the path by vent'rous heroes trod,
This box my thunder, this right hand my god?
Or, chair'd at White's,[2] amidst the doctors sit,
Teach oaths to gamesters, and to nobles wit?
Or bidst thou rather party to embrace?
(A friend to party thou, and all her race;
'T is the same rope at diff'rent ends they twist.
To Dulness Ridpath is as dear as Mist.)[3]
Shall I, like Curtius, desp'rate in my zeal,
O'er head and ears plunge for the commonweal?[4]
Or rob Rome's ancient geese of all their glories,
And cackling save the monarchy of Tories?[5]
Hold—to the minister I more incline;
To serve his cause, O Queen! is serving thine.

[1] In his "Imitations of Horace" (II, i, 92) Pope had praised some lines in Cibber's "The Careless Husband."

[2] In Pope's "Moral Essays" (III, 67f.) there is a frank indication of the goings-on at White's Club.

[3] George Ridpath, author of a Whig paper, called *The Flying-Post;* Nathaniel Mist, of a famous Tory journal.—*Pope.*

[4] Curtius leaped fully armed and on horseback into a fissure caused by an earthquake in the Roman Forum. It closed immediately, since he as a Roman warrior represented the greatest treasure that Rome could sacrifice for this purpose.

[5] The cackling of geese warned the Romans of the approach of the Gauls in 390 B.C. as they were climbing up the walls near the Capitol.

And see! thy very gazetteers give o'er,
Ev'n Ralph repents, and Henley writes no more.
What then remains? Ourself. Still, still remain
Cibberian forehead and Cibberian brain.
This brazen brightness, to the 'squire so dear;
This polish'd hardness, that reflects the peer;
This arch absurd, that wit and fool delights:
This mess, toss'd up of Hockley Hole[1] and White's,
Where dukes and butchers join to wreathe my crown,
At once the bear and fiddle of the town.
"O born in sin, and forth in folly brought!
Works damn'd or to be damn'd (your father's fault)!
Go, purify'd by flames ascend the sky,
My better and more Christian progeny!
Unstain'd, untouch'd, and yet in maiden sheets;
While all your smutty sisters walk the streets.
Ye shall not beg, like gratis-given Bland,[2]
Sent with a pass, and vagrant through the land;
Not sail with Ward,[3] to ape-and-monkey climes,
Where vile Mundungus[4] trucks for viler rhymes:
Not sulphur-tipt, emblaze an ale-house fire;
Not wrap up oranges, to pelt your sire![5]
O! pass more innocent, in infant state,
To the mild limbo of our father Tate:
Or, peaceably forgot, at once be blest
In Shadwell's bosom with eternal rest!
Soon to that mass of nonsense to return,
Where things destroy'd are swept to things unborn."
With that, a tear (portentous sign of grace!)
Stole from the master of the sev'nfold face;
And thrice he lifted high the birth-day brand,
And thrice he dropt it from his quiv'ring hand;
Then lights the structure, with averted eyes:
The rolling smoke involves the sacrifice.

[1] a bear-garden outside the walls of the city.

[2] Bland was head master at Eton. It was the practice so to give the Daily Gazetteer and ministerial pamphlets (in which this Bland was a writer), and to send them *post free* to all the towns in the kingdom.—*Pope.*

[3] Great numbers of Edward Ward's works were yearly sold into the Plantations.—*Pope.*

[4] bad-smelling tobacco to be wrapt up in the leaves of Ward's poetry.

[5] referring to the custom of pelting the actors with orange peel.

The op'ning clouds disclose each work by turns,
Now flames the Cid, and now Perolla burns;
Great Cæsar roars, and hisses in the fires;
King John in silence modestly expires;[1]
No merit now the dear Nonjuror claims,
Molière's old stubble in a moment flames.[2]
Tears gush'd again, as from pale Priam's eyes,
When the last blaze sent Ilion to the skies.
 Rous'd by the light, old Dulness heav'd the head,
Then snatch'd a sheet of Thulè[3] from her bed;
Sudden she flies, and whelms it o'er the pyre;
Down sink the flames, and with a hiss expire.
 Her ample presence fills up all the place;
A veil of fogs dilates her awful face:
Great in her charms! as when on shrieves and may'rs
She looks, and breathes herself into their airs.
She bids him wait her to her sacred dome:
Well pleas'd he enter'd, and confess'd his home:
So, spirits ending their terrestrial race,
Ascend, and recognize their native place.
This the great mother dearer held than all
The clubs of quidnuncs[4] or her own Guildhall;
Here stood her opium, here she nurs'd her owls,
And here she plann'd th' imperial seat of fools.
 Here to her chosen all her works she shows:
Prose swell'd to verse, verse loit'ring into prose:
How random thoughts now meaning chance to find,
Now leave all memory of sense behind:
How prologues into prefaces decay,
And these to notes are fritter'd quite away;
How index-learning turns no student pale,
Yet holds the eel of science by the tail:
How, with less reading than makes felons 'scape,[5]
Less human genius than God gives an ape,

[1] "Ximena, or The Heroic Daughter" (1719) was borrowed from "Le Cid" of Corneille. "Indamora and Perolla" and "Cæsar in Egypt" were acted and damned in 1706 and 1725 respectively. "King John" was withdrawn because of the attacks of the critics.

[2] See l. 132, n. [3] the title of an unfinished poem.

[4] newsmongers; news-hunters: *Quid nunc?* "What news?"

[5] Felons escaped punishment by pleading benefit of clergy, which for a first offense was satisfied by an ability to read.

Small thanks to France and none to Rome or Greece,
A vast, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd, new piece,
'Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Shakespear, and Corneille,
Can make a Cibber, Tibbald, or Ozell.
The goddess then, o'er his anointed head,
With mystic words, the sacred opium shed.
And lo! her bird (a monster of a fowl,
Something betwixt a heideggre[1] and owl)
Perch'd on his crown. "All hail! and hail again,
My son! the promis'd land expects thy reign.
Know, Eusden thirsts no more for sack or praise;
He sleeps among the dull of ancient days;
Safe, where no critics damn, no duns molest,
Where wretched Withers, Ward, and Gildon rest,[2]
And high-born Howard,[3] more majestic sire,
With fool of quality[4] completes the quire.
Thou, Cibber! thou, his laurel shalt support,
Folly, my son, has still a friend at court.
Lift up your gates, ye princes, see him come!
Sound, sound, ye viols; be the cat-call dumb!
Bring, bring the madding bay, the drunken vine;
The creeping, dirty, courtly ivy join!
And thou! his aide-de-camp, lead on my sons,
Light-arm'd with points, antitheses, and puns.
Let Bawdry, Billingsgate, my daughters dear,
Support his front, and Oaths bring up the rear:
And under his, and under Archer's wing,[5]
Gaming and Grub-street skulk behind the King.[6]

[1] John James Heidegger (1659–1749), manager of the opera house in the Haymarket, won a wager with the Earl of Chesterfield that his face was the most hideous in all London. Pope said the name was that of "a strange bird from Switzerland, and not (as some have supposed) the name of an eminent person."

[2] George Wither(s) (1588–1667), Edward Ward (1667–1731), Charles Gildon (1665-1724). The first of these wrote some excellent lyrics, but the others were poor critics.

[3] Hon. Edward Howard, author of the British Princes and a great number of wonderful pieces.—*Pope.*

[4] Lord Hervey. See "Ep. to Arbuthnot," l. 305, n.

[5] Thomas Archer, groom-porter to the King, had protected gambling at court.

[6] When the statute against gaming was drawn up, it was represented that the King by ancient custom plays at hazard one night in the year; and therefore a clause was inserted with an exception as to that particular.—*Pope.*

O! when shall rise a monarch all our own,
And I, a nursing mother, rock the throne;
'Twixt prince and people close the curtain draw,
Shade him from light, and cover him from law;
Fatten the courtier, starve the learned band,
And suckle armies, and dry-nurse the land:
Till senates nod to lullabies divine,
And all be sleep, as at an ode of thine."
She ceas'd. Then swells the Chapel-royal throat:
God save King Cibber! mounts in ev'ry note:
Familiar White's, "God save King Colley!" cries;
"God save King Colley!" Drury-lane replies:
To Needham's[1] quick the voice triumphal rode,
But pious Needham dropt the name of God;
Back to the Devil[2] the last echoes roll,
And "Coll!" each Butcher roars at Hockley-hole.
So when Jove's block descended from on high
(As sings thy great forefather Ogilby)
Loud thunder to its bottom shook the bog,
And the hoarse nation croak'd, "God save King Log!"[3]

(1728–43)

The Universal Prayer

DEO OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
Who all my sense confin'd
To know but this, that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

[1] Mrs. Needham, "a matron of great fame, and very religious in her way; . . . she was set in the pillory . . . and so ill used by the populace that it put an end to her days" (*Pope*). Ironical.

[2] the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street.

[3] See Ogilby's "Æsop's Fables," where, in the story of the Frogs and their King, this excellent hemistich is to be found.—*Pope*. The story is that the frogs asked Jupiter for a king, and he in response threw down to them a log.

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill:
And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives,
T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness led me bound,
Or think Thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round:

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has deny'd,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others shew,
That mercy shew to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
 Since quick'ned by thy breath;
Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
 Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:
 All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
 And let thy will be done.

To thee, whose temple is all space,
 Whose altar earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all being raise!
 All nature's incense rise!

(1738)

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea

1661–1720

ANNE KINGSMILL, the daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, of Sidmonton, Hampshire, was born in April, 1661. She became one of the maids of honor of Mary of Modena, the wife of the Duke of York, who in 1685 ascended the throne as James II. In May, 1684, she married Colonel Heneage Finch, who in 1712 succeeded to the title as the fourth Earl of Winchilsea. At the time of his marriage the latter was in the direct service of the Duke of York; in James's reign, he was groom of the bedchamber and deputy lieutenant for the county of Kent, and sat for one year in Parliament. After the revolution, the Finches could not bring themselves to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. For two years they wandered about in retirement with no fixed place of abode; their unhappy state is reflected in Mrs. Finch's poetry during this period. Then, in 1690, came an invitation from the third Earl of Winchilsea to make their home with him at Eastwell, and from that time on the verses of Anne (or, as she was poetically called, Ardelia) have a much livelier hue. Every now and then, however, she had attacks of the eighteenth-century malady called "the spleen," and she made visits to health resorts to cure herself of its painful effects, mental and physical. Her first published work appeared in Gildon's *Miscellany*, in 1701. Some of her poems appeared as "Miscellany Poems, Written by a Lady" in 1713, and others in Steele and Fenton's *Miscellanies*, in 1714 and 1717. She died on August 5, 1720.

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The Spleen[1]

A Pindaric Poem

What art thou, Spleen, which ev'ry thing dost ape?
Thou Proteus[2] to abus'd mankind,
Who never yet thy real cause could find,
Or fix thee to remain in one continued shape.
Still varying thy perplexing form,
Now a Dead Sea thou'lt represent,
A calm of stupid discontent,
Then, dashing on the rocks, wilt rage into a storm.
Trembling sometimes thou dost appear,
Dissolved into a panic fear;
On sleep intruding dost thy shadows spread,
Thy gloomy terrors round the silent bed,
And crowd with boding dreams the melancholy head;
Or, when the midnight hour is told,
And drooping lids thou still dost waking hold,
Thy fond delusions cheat the eyes:
Before them antic spectres dance,
Unusual fires their pointed heads advance,
And airy phantoms rise.
Such was the monstrous vision seen,
When Brutus (now beneath his cares opprest,
And all Rome's fortunes rolling on his breast,
Before Philippi's latest field,
Before his fate did to Octavius lead)[3]
Was vanquish'd by the spleen.

Falsely the mortal part we blame
Of our deprest, and pond'rous frame,

[1] Excessive dejection or depression of spirits; melancholia.—*N.E.D.*
[2] The prophetic old man of the sea, who changed into every possible shape to avoid being caught and forced to prophesy.
[3] See "Julius Cæsar," IV, iii, 275f.

Which, till the first degrading sin
Let thee, its dull attendant, in,
Still with the other did comply,
Nor clogg'd the active soul, dispos'd to fly,
And range the mansions of its native sky.
Nor, whilst in his own heaven he dwelt,
Whilst man his Paradise possest,
His fertile garden in the fragrant east,
And all united odours smelt,
No armed sweets, until thy reign,
Could shock the sense, or in the face
A flusht unhandsome colour place.
Now the jonquil o'ercomes the feeble brain;
We faint beneath the aromatic pain,
Till some offensive scent thy pow'rs appease,
And pleasure we resign for short, and nauseous ease.

In ev'ry one thou dost possess
New are thy motions, and thy dress:
Now in some grove a list'ning friend
Thy false suggestions must attend,
Thy whisper'd griefs, thy fancy'd sorrows hear,
Breath'd in a sigh, and witness'd by a tear;
Whilst in the light, and vulgar crowd,
Thy slaves, more clamorous and loud,
By laughters unprovok'd, thy influence too confess.
In the imperious wife thou vapours art,
Which from o'er-heated passions rise
In clouds to the attractive brain,
Until descending thence again,
Thro' the o'er-cast, and show'ring eyes,
Upon her husband's soften'd heart,
He the disputed point must yield,
Something resign of the contested field:
Till lordly man, born to imperial sway,
Compounds for peace, to make that right away,
And woman, arm'd with Spleen, does servilely obey.

The fool, to imitate the wits,
Complains of thy pretended fits,
And dullness, born with him, would lay

Upon thy accidental sway;
Because, sometimes, thou dost presume
Into the ablest heads to come:
That, often, men of thoughts refin'd,
Impatient of unequal sense,
Such slow returns, where they so much dispense,
Retiring from the crowd, are to thy shades inclin'd.
O'er me alas! thou dost too much prevail:
I feel thy force, whilst I against thee rail;
I feel my verse decay, and my crampt numbers fail.
Thro' thy black jaundice, I all objects see,
As dark, and terrible as thee,
My lines decry'd, and my employment thought
An useless folly, or presumptuous fault:
Whilst in the Muses' paths I stray,
Whilst in their groves, and by their secret springs
My hand delights to trace unusual things,
And deviates from the known, and common way;
Nor will in fading silks compose
Faintly th' inimitable rose,
Fill up an ill-drawn bird, or paint on glass
The sov'reign's blurr'd and undistinguish'd face,
The threat'ning angel, and the speaking ass.

Patron thou art to ev'ry gross abuse,
The sullen husband's feign'd excuse,
When the ill humour with his wife he spends,
And bears recruited wit, and spirits to his friends.
The son of Bacchus pleads thy pow'r,
As to the glass he still repairs,
Pretends but to remove thy cares,
Snatch from thy shades one gay, and smiling hour,
And drown thy kingdom in a purple show'r.
When the coquette, whom ev'ry fool admires,
Would in variety be fair,
And, changing hastily the scene
From light, impertinent, and vain,
Assumes a soft, a melancholy air,
And of her eyes rebates the wand'ring fires,
The careless posture, and the head reclin'd,
The thoughtful, and composed face,
Proclaiming the withdrawn, the absent mind,

Allows the fop more liberty to gaze,
Who gently for the tender cause enquires:
The cause, indeed, is a defect in sense,
Yet is the Spleen alleg'd, and still the dull pretence.
But these are thy fantastic harms,
The tricks of thy pernicious stage,
Which do the weaker sort engage;
Worse are the dire effects of thy more pow'rful charms.
By thee religion, all we know,
That should enlighten here below,
Is veil'd in darkness, and perplext
With anxious doubts, with endless scruples vext,
And some restraint imply'd from each perverted text.
Whilst touch not, taste not, what is freely giv'n,
Is but thy niggard voice, disgracing bounteous heav'n.
From speech restrain'd, by thy deceits abus'd,
To deserts banish'd, or in cells reclus'd,
Mistaken vot'ries to the Powers Divine,
Whilst they a purer sacrifice design,
Do but the Spleen obey, and worship at thy shrine.
In vain to chase thee ev'ry art we try,
In vain all remedies apply,
In vain the Indian leaf[1] infuse,
Or the parch'd eastern berry[2] bruise;
Some pass, in vain, those bounds, and nobler liquors use.
Now harmony, in vain, we bring,
Inspire the flute and touch the string.
From harmony no help is had;
Music but soothes thee, if too sweetly sad,
And if too light, but turns thee gaily mad.
Tho' the physician's greatest gains,
Altho' his growing wealth he sees
Daily increas'd by ladies' fees,
Yet dost thou baffle all his studious pains.
Not skilful Lower[3] thy source could find,
Or thro' the well-dissected body trace

[1] tea. [2] coffee.

[3] Richard Lower (1631–1691), a famous physician and physiologist, who made extensive anatomical researches on the nervous system and who was "*esteemed the most noted physician in Westminster and London.*" His most remarkable experiment was the transfusion of blood from one animal into the veins of another (1665).

The secret, the mysterious ways,
By which thou dost surprise, and prey upon the mind.
Tho' in the search, too deep for human thought,
With unsuccessful toil he wrought,
Till thinking thee to 've catch'd, himself by thee was caught,
Retain'd thy pris'ner, thy acknowledg'd slave,
And sank beneath thy chain to a lamented grave.

(1701)

The Tree[1]

Fair tree! for thy delightful shade
'T is just that some return be made;
Sure, some return is due from me
To thy cool shadows, and to thee.
When thou to birds do'st shelter give,
Thou music do'st from them receive;
If travellers beneath thee stay,
Till storms have worn themselves away,
That time in praising thee they spend,
And thy protecting pow'r commend:
The shepherd here, from scorching freed,
Tunes to thy dancing leaves his reed;
Whilst his lov'd nymph, in thanks, bestows
Her flow'ry chaplets on thy boughs.
Shall I then only silent be,
And no return be made by me?
No; let this wish upon thee wait,
And still to flourish be thy fate,
To future ages may'st thou stand
Untouch'd by the rash workman's hand;
Till that large stock of sap is spent,
Which gives thy summer's ornament;
Till the fierce winds, that vainly strive
To shock thy greatness whilst alive,
Shall on thy lifeless hour attend,
Prevent the axe, and grace thy end;

[1] Reprinted with the kind permission of the Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham and of the University of Chicago Press.

Their scatter'd strength together call;
And to the clouds proclaim thy fall;
Who then their ev'ning-dews may spare,
When thou no longer art their care;
But shalt, like ancient heroes, burn,
And some bright hearth be made thy urn.

(Publ. 1903)

To the Nightingale

EXERT thy voice, sweet harbinger of Spring!
This moment is thy time to sing,
This moment I attend to praise,
And set my numbers to thy lays.
Free as thine shall be my song;
As thy music, short, or long.
Poets, wild as thee, were born,
Pleasing best when unconfin'd,
When to please is least design'd,
Soothing but their cares to rest;
Cares do still their thoughts molest,
And still th' unhappy poet's breast,
Like thine, when best he sings, is plac'd against a thorn.
She begins, let all be still!
Muse, thy promise now fulfil!
Sweet, oh! sweet, still sweeter yet
Can thy words such accents fit,
Canst thou syllables refine,
Melt a sense that shall retain
Still some spirit of the brain,
Till with sounds like these it join.
'Twill not be! then change thy note;
Let division[1] shake thy throat.
Hark! division now she tries;
Yet as far the muse outflies.
Cease then, prithee, cease thy tune;
Trifler, wilt thou sing till June?
Till thy bus'ness all lies waste,

[1] The execution of a rapid melodic passage, originally conceived as the dividing of each of a succession of long notes into several short ones.—*N.E.D.*

And the time of building's past!
Thus we poets that have speech,
Unlike what thy forests teach,
If a fluent vein be shown
That's transcendent to our own,
Criticise, reform, or preach,
Or censure what we cannot reach.

(Publ. 1713)

Timely Advice to Dorinda

DORINDA, since you must decay,
Your lover now resign,
As Charles that empire gave away
He saw would soon decline.[1]

'Tis better in the height of power
Thus with your sway to part,
Than stay till that more fatal hour
Of his revolted heart.

For wit but faintly will inspire
Unless with beauty join'd,
And when our eyes have lost their fire
'Tis useless in the mind.

Be then advis'd and now remove
All further thoughts about it,
Since youth we find's too short for love,
Though life's too long without it.

(1713)

A Nocturnal Reverie

IN SUCH a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confin'd;
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;

[1] Emperor Charles V abdicated in 1556.

Or from some tree, fam'd for the owl's delight,
She hollowing clear, directs the wand'rer right:
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heav'n's mysterious face;
When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshen'd grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbine, and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip shelter'd grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
When scatter'd glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Show trivial beauties watch their hour to shine,
Whilst Salisb'ry stands the test of every light
In perfect charms, and perfect virtue bright:
When odours, which declin'd repelling day,
Thro' temp'rate air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When thro' the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose,
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' th' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear,
Till torn up forage in his teeth we hear:
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine re-chew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their shortliv'd jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant-man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something, too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a compos'dness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,

Joys in th' inferior world, and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confus'd again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renew'd,
Or pleasures, seldom reach'd, again pursu'd.

(Publ. 1713)

To Death

O KING of terrors, whose unbounded sway
All that have life, must certainly obey;
The king, the priest, the prophet, all are thine,
Nor would ev'n God (in flesh) thy stroke decline.
My name is on thy roll, and sure I must
Increase thy gloomy kingdom in the dust.
My soul at this no apprehension feels,
But trembles at thy swords, thy racks, thy wheels;
Thy scorching fevers, which distract the sense,
And snatch us raving, unprepar'd, from hence;
At thy contagious darts, that wound the heads
Of weeping friends, who wait at dying beds.
Spare these, and let thy time be when it will:
My bus'ness is to die, and thine to kill.
Gently thy fatal sceptre on me lay,
And take to thy cold arms, insensibly, thy prey.

(Publ. 1713)

Thomas Parnell

1679–1718

THOMAS PARNELL, the son of an Englishman who had settled in Ireland, was born in Dublin in 1679. He attended school in his native city and entered Trinity College, Dublin, graduating B.A. in 1697, and proceeding to an M.A. in 1700. The same year he was ordained deacon, and three years later, priest. In 1703 he was made a minor canon of St. Patrick's, Dublin, and in 1706 archdeacon of Clogher. He was on friendly terms with Swift and other Tories, but not so antagonistic to the Whigs that he would not write for *The Spectator* and *The Guardian* in behalf of Addison and Steele. In 1712 he wrote his "Essay on the Different Styles of Poetry." The same year, Trinity made him a Doctor of Divinity. He published four poems in Steele's *Poetical Miscellanies* in 1713. He became a member of the Scriblerus Club, made up of young and brilliant Tories. In 1715 he contributed an "Essay on Homer" for Pope's translation of the "Iliad." He then received a further promotion in the church, the Archbishop of Dublin giving him the vicarage of Finglas; at the same time he resigned the archdeaconry of Clogher. The only separate volume published during his lifetime was his "Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice, with the Remarks of Zoilus," which came out in 1717. He went back to London in 1718, and there exchanged verses with Lord Oxford; but he died in Chester on his way back to Ireland, and was buried in Holy Trinity Churchyard on October 24. Pope brought out an edition of Parnell's poems in 1721 with a dedication to Lord Oxford.

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A Hymn to Contentment

LOVELY, lasting peace of mind!
Sweet delight of human-kind!
Heavenly-born, and bred on high,
To crown the fav'rites of the sky
With more of happiness below,
Than victors in a triumph know!
Whither, O whither art thou fled,
To lay thy meek, contented head?
What happy region dost thou please
To make the seat of calms and ease?
Ambition searches all its sphere
Of pomp and state, to meet thee there.
Increasing Avarice would find
Thy presence in its gold enshrin'd.
The bold advent'rer ploughs his way,
Through rocks amidst the foaming sea,
To gain thy love; and then perceives
Thou wert not in the rocks and waves.
The silent heart which grief assails,
Treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales,
Sees daisies open, rivers run,
And seeks (as I have vainly done)
Amusing thought; but learns to know
That Solitude's the nurse of woe.
No real happiness is found
In trailing purple o'er the ground:
Or in a soul exalted high,
To range the circuit of the sky,
Converse with stars above, and know
All nature in its forms below;
The rest it seeks, in seeking dies,
And doubts at last for knowledge rise.

Lovely, lasting peace appear!
This world itself, if thou art here,
Is once again with Eden blest,
And man contains it in his breast.
'Twas thus, as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
The branches whisper as they wav'd:
It seem'd, as all the quiet place
Confess'd the presence of the Grace.
When thus she spoke—"Go rule thy will,
Bid thy wild passions all be still,
Know God—and bring thy heart to know,
The joys which from religion flow:
Then ev'ry Grace shall prove its guest,
And I'll be there to crown the rest."
Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
In my hours of sweet retreat;
Might I thus my soul employ,
With sense of gratitude and joy:
Rais'd as ancient prophets were,
In heavenly vision, praise, and pray'r;
Pleasing all men, hurting none,
Pleas'd and bless'd with God alone:
Then while the gardens take my sight,
With all the colours of delight;
While silver waters glide along,
To please my ear, and court my song;
I'll lift my voice, and tune my string,
And thee, great Source of Nature, sing.
The sun that walks his airy way,
To light the world, and give the day;
The moon that shines with borrow'd light;
The stars that gild the gloomy night;
The seas that roll unnumber'd waves;
The wood that spreads its shady leaves;
The field whose ears conceal the grain,
The yellow treasure of the plain;
All of these, and all I see,

Should be sung, and sung by me:
They speak their Maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.
 Go search among your idle dreams,
Your busy, or your vain extremes;
And find a life of equal bliss,
Or own the next begun in this.

(1714)

A Night-Piece on Death

By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:
Their books from wisdom widely stray,
Or point at best the longest way.
I'll seek a readier path. and go
Where wisdom's surely taught below.
 How deep yon azure dyes the sky!
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide.
The slumb'ring breeze forgets to
 breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire:
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest."

Those graves, with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground,
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,
Where toil and poverty repose.
The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
The chisel's slender help to fame,
(Which ere our set of friends decay
Their frequent steps may wear away.)
A middle race of mortals own,
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.
The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,
Whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones,
These (all the poor remains of state)
Adorn the rich, or praise the great;
Who while on earth in fame they live,
Are senseless of the fame they give.
Ha! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow, and wan, and wrap'd with shrouds,
They rise in visionary crowds,
And all with sober accent cry,
"Think, mortal, what it is to die."
Now from yon black and fun'ral yew,
That bathes the charnel-house with dew,
Methinks I hear a voice begin;
(Ye ravens, cease your croaking din,
Ye tolling clocks, no time resound
O'er the long lake and midnight ground)
It sends a peal of hollow groans,
Thus speaking from among the bones.
"When men my scythe and darts supply,
How great a King of Fears am I!
They view me like the last of things;
They make, and then they dread, my stings.
Fools! if you less provok'd your fears,
No more my spectre-form appears.
Death's but a path that must be trod,
If man would ever pass to God;
A port of calms, a state of ease

From the rough rage of swelling seas."
 Why then thy flowing sable stoles,
Deep pendant cypress, mourning poles,
Loose scarfs to fall athwart thy weeds,
Long palls, drawn hearses, cover'd steeds,
And plumes of black, that as they tread,
Nod o'er the 'scutcheons of the dead?
 Nor can the parted body know,
Nor wants the soul, these forms of woe;
As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glimmer round the cell,
Whene'er their suffering years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun:
Such joy, though far transcending sense,
Have pious souls at parting hence.
On earth, and in the body plac'd,
A few, and evil years, they waste:
But when their chains are cast aside,
See the glad scene unfolding wide,
Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,
And mingle with the blaze of day.

(1721)

Song

When thy beauty appears
In its graces and airs,
All bright as an angel new dropt from the sky;
At distance I gaze, and am aw'd by my fears,
So strangely you dazzle my eye!

But when without art,
Your kind thoughts you impart,
When your love runs in blushes through every vein:
When it darts from your eyes, when it pants in your heart,
Then I know you're a woman again.

There's a passion and pride
In our sex, she reply'd,

And thus (might I gratify both) I would do:
Still an angel appear to each lover beside,
But still be a woman to you.

(1721)

The Hermit

FAR in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a rev'rend hermit grew;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well:
Remote from man, with God he pass'd the days,
Pray'r all his business, all his pleasure praise.
A life so sacred, such serene repose,
Seem'd heaven itself, till one suggestion rose;
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway:
His hopes no more a certain prospect boast,
And all the tenour of his soul is lost:
So when a smooth expanse receives imprest
Calm nature's image on its wat'ry breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answ'ring colours glow:
But if a stone the gentle scene divide,
Swift ruffling circles curl on ev'ry side,
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,
Banks, trees, and skies, in thick disorder run.
To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if books, or swains, report it right;
(For yet by swains alone the world he knew,
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew)
He quits his cell; the pilgrim-staff he bore,
And fix'd the scallop in his hat before;
Then with the sun a rising journey went,
Sedate to think, and watching each event.
The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,
And long and lonesome was the wild to pass;
But when the southern sun had warm'd the day,
A youth came posting o'er a crossing way;
His raiment decent, his complexion fair,

And soft in graceful ringlets wav'd his hair.
Then near approaching, "Father, hail!" he cried,
"And hail, my son," the reverend sire replied;
Words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd,
And talk of various kind deceiv'd the road;
Till each with other pleas'd, and loth to part,
While in their age they differ, join in heart:
Thus stands an aged elm in ivy bound,
Thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.
 Now sunk the sun; the closing hour of day
Came onward, mantled o'er with sober gray;
Nature in silence bid the world repose;
When near the road a stately palace rose:
There by the moon through ranks of trees they pass,
Whose verdure crown'd their sloping sides of grass.
It chanc'd the noble master of the dome
Still made his house the wand'ring stranger's home:
Yet still the kindness, from a thirst of praise,
Prov'd the vain flourish of expensive ease.
The pair arrive: the liv'ried servants wait;
Their lord receives them at the pompous gate.
The table groans with costly piles of food,
And all is more than hospitably good.
Then led to rest, the day's long toil they drown,
Deep sunk in sleep, and silk, and heaps of down.
 At length 'tis morn, and at the dawn of day,
Along the wide canals the zephyrs play;
Fresh o'er the gay parterres the breezes creep,
And shake the neighb'ring wood to banish sleep.
Up rise the guests, obedient to the call:
An early banquet deck'd the splendid hall;
Rich luscious wine a golden goblet grac'd,
Which the kind master forc'd the guests to taste.
Then pleas'd and thankful, from the porch they go,
And, but the landlord, none had cause of woe;
His cup was vanish'd; for in secret guise
The younger guest purloin'd the glittering prize.
 As one who spies a serpent in his way,
Glist'ning and basking in the summer ray,
Disorder'd stops to shun the danger near,
Then walks with faintness on, and looks with fear;

So seem'd the sire; when far upon the road,
The shining spoil his wily partner show'd.
He stopp'd with silence, walk'd with trembling heart,
And much he wish'd, but durst not ask to part:
Murm'ring he lifts his eyes, and thinks it hard,
That generous actions meet a base reward.
While thus they pass, the sun his glory shrouds,
The changing skies hang out their sable clouds;
A sound in air presag'd approaching rain,
And beasts to covert scud across the plain.
Warn'd by the signs, the wand'ring pair retreat,
To seek for shelter at a neighb'ring seat.
'Twas built with turrets, on a rising ground,
And strong, and large, and unimprov'd around;
Its owner's temper, tim'rous and severe,
Unkind and griping, caus'd a desert there.
As near the miser's heavy doors they drew,
Fierce rising gusts with sudden fury blew;
The nimble lightning mix'd with show'rs began,
And o'er their heads loud-rolling thunder ran.
Here long they knock, but knock or call in vain,
Driv'n by the wind, and batter'd by the rain.
At length some pity warm'd the master's breast,
('Twas then, his threshold first receiv'd a guest)
Slow creaking turns the door with jealous care,
And half he welcomes in the shivering pair;
One frugal faggot lights the naked walls,
And nature's fervour through their limbs recalls:
Bread of the coarsest sort, with eager[1] wine,
(Each hardly granted) serv'd them both to dine;
And when the tempest first appear'd to cease,
A ready warning bid them part in peace.
With still remark the pond'ring hermit view'd
In one so rich, a life so poor and rude;
And why should such, (within himself he cried)
Lock the lost wealth a thousand want beside?
But what new marks of wonder soon took place,
In ev'ry settling feature of his face;
When from his vest the young companion bore
That cup, the gen'rous landlord own'd before,

[1] sour; acid; tart.

And paid profusely with the precious bowl
The stinted kindness of this churlish soul.
 But now the clouds in airy tumult fly;
The sun emerging opes an azure sky;
A fresher green the smelling leaves display,
And glitt'ring as they tremble, cheer the day:
The weather courts them from the poor retreat,
And the glad master bolts the wary gate.
 While hence they walk, the pilgrim's bosom wrought
With all the travail of uncertain thought;
His partner's acts without their cause appear,
'Twas there a vice, and seem'd a madness here:
Detesting that, and pitying this he goes,
Lost and confounded with the various shows.
 Now night's dim shades again involve the sky;
Again the wand'rers want a place to lie,
Again they search, and find a lodging nigh.
The soil improv'd around, the mansion neat,
And neither poorly low, nor idly great:
It seem'd to speak its master's turn of mind,
Content, and not for praise, but virtue kind.
 Hither the walkers turn with weary feet,
Then bless the mansion, and the master greet:
Their greeting fair bestow'd, with modest guise,
The courteous master hears, and thus replies:
 "Without a vain, without a grudging heart,
To him who gives us all, I yield a part;
From him you come, for him accept it here,
A frank and sober, more than costly cheer."
He spoke, and bid the welcome table spread,
Then talk'd of virtue till the time of bed,
When the grave household round his hall repair,
Warn'd by a bell, and close the hours with pray'r.
 At length the world renew'd by calm repose
Was strong for toil, the dappled morn arose;
Before the pilgrims part, the younger crept
Near the clos'd cradle where an infant slept,
And writh'd his neck: the landlord's little pride,
O strange return! grew black, and gasp'd, and died.
Horror of horrors! what! his only son!

How look'd our hermit when the fact[1] was done?
Not hell, though hell's black jaws in sunder part,
And breathe blue fire, could more assault his heart.
Confus'd, and struck with silence at the deed,
He flies, but, trembling, fails to fly with speed.
His steps the youth pursues: the country lay
Perplex'd with roads, a servant show'd the way:
A river cross'd the path; the passage o'er
Was nice[2] to find; the servant trod before;
Long arms of oaks an open bridge supplied,
And deep the waves beneath the bending glide.
The youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,
Approach'd the careless guide, and thrust him in;
Plunging he falls, and rising lifts his head,
Then flashing turns, and sinks among the dead.
Wild, sparkling rage inflames the father's eyes,
He bursts the bands of fear, and madly cries,
"Detested wretch!"—but scarce his speech began,
When the strange partner seem'd no longer man:
His youthful face grew more serenely sweet;
His robe turn'd white, and flow'd upon his feet;
Fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair;
Celestial odours breathe through purpled air;
And wings, whose colours glitter'd on the day,
Wide at his back their gradual plumes display.
The form ethereal bursts upon his sight,
And moves in all the majesty of light.
Though loud at first the pilgrim's passion grew,
Sudden he gaz'd, and wist not what to do;
Surprise in secret chains his words suspends,
And in a calm his settling temper ends.
But silence here the beauteous angel broke,
(The voice of music ravish'd as he spoke).
Thy pray'r, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown,
In sweet memorial rise before the throne:
These charms, success in our bright region find,
And force an angel down, to calm thy mind;
For this, commission'd, I forsook the sky,
Nay, cease to kneel—thy fellow-servant I.

[1] deed. [2] difficult.

"Then know the truth of government divine,
And let these scruples be no longer thine.
"The Maker justly claims that world he made,
In this the right of Providence is laid;
Its sacred majesty through all depends
On using second means to work his ends:
'Tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,
The pow'r exerts his attributes on high,
Your actions uses, nor controls your will,
And bids the doubting sons of men be still.
"What strange events can strike with more surprise,
Than those which lately struck thy wond'ring eyes?
Yet taught by these, confess th' Almighty just,
And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!
"The great, vain man, who far'd on costly food,
Whose life was too luxurious to be good;
Who made his iv'ry stands with goblets shine,
And forc'd his guests to morning draughts of wine,
Has, with the cup, the graceless custom lost,
And still he welcomes, but with less of cost.
"The mean, suspicious wretch, whose bolted door
Ne'er mov'd in duty to the wand'ring poor;
With him I left the cup, to teach his mind
That Heav'n can bless, if mortals will be kind.
Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,
And feels compassion touch his grateful soul.
Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
With heaping coals of fire upon its head;
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And loose from dross, the silver runs below.
"Long had our pious friend in virtue trod,
But now the child half-wean'd his heart from God;
(Child of his age) for him he liv'd in pain,
And measur'd back his steps to earth again.
To what excesses had this dotage run?
But God, to save the father, took the son.
To all but thee, in fits he seem'd to go,
(And 'twas my ministry to deal the blow).
The poor fond parent, humbled in the dust,
Now owns in tears the punishment was just.
"But how had all his fortune felt a wrack,

Had that false servant sped in safety back!
This night his treasur'd heaps he meant to steal,
And what a fund of charity would fail!
"Thus Heaven instructs thy mind: this trial o'er,
Depart in peace, resign, and sin no more."
On sounding pinions here the youth withdrew,
The sage stood wond'ring as the seraph flew.
Thus look'd Elisha, when to mount on high,
His master took the chariot of the sky;
The fiery pomp ascending left the view;
The prophet gaz'd, and wish'd to follow too.
The bending hermit here a pray'r begun,
"Lord! as in heaven, on earth thy will be done."
Then gladly turning, sought his ancient place,
And pass'd a life of piety and peace.

(1721)

John Gay

1685–1732

JOHN GAY, a descendant of an ancient but impoverished Devonshire family, was born at Barnstaple and was baptized on September 16, 1685. He was educated at the free grammar school of his native town, and then was given the rather humble job of apprentice to a mercer in London, which job he soon threw up in disgust. Report has it that he was secretary to Aaron Hill, the dramatist. In 1712 he was made secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth, by which time he had won some reputation as a writer of verse. He published his "Rural Sports" in 1713, with a dedication to Pope. He wrote some articles for *The Guardian* and published two elegies in Steele's *Poetical Miscellanies*. In 1714 he entered the Pope-Philips war over pastorals, and wrote "The Shepherd's Week," a series of eclogues against the sham pastoral, which he dedicated to Bolingbroke. Through the influence of Swift or Swift's friends, he was appointed secretary to Lord Clarendon, envoy extraordinary to the court of Hanover; but on the death of Anne in 1714, his office ceased to be, and he could only return to England. In the following year, he published his tragi-comi-pastoral farce, "What-D'Ye-Call-It," in which he made fun of current dramatic productions. His "Trivia: or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London," which was probably suggested by Swift's "Morning" or "City Shower," was published in 1716. "Three Hours after Marriage," in which Pope and Arbuthnot had an active share, was acted at Drury Lane and stirred up a tempest in a teapot more by its failure than by its satire. In 1720 Tonson and Lintot published his poems in two volumes, earning for Gay about £1000. This he invested in South Sea stock, and saw it rise to £20,000 and then drop to nothing. Like many another, then and since, he would not sell at the "top," and his beautiful fortune vanished. At this time, the Duchess of Queensberry became a kind friend and a generous patron, and remained so to the end of his life. Towards the close of 1725 he began writing his "Fables," of which the first series was published in 1727 and to which he kept making additions until his death. The work by which he is perhaps best known, "The Beggar's Opera," was produced on January 29, 1728, and so successful was it that it was said to have made Gay rich, and Rich, his manager, gay. The work was sug-

gested by Swift, who said, "What think you of a Newgate pastoral?" The sequel, "Polly," was forbidden the stage by the Lord Chamberlain, but its publication brought Gay over £1000. He died on December 4, 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The Queensberrys erected a monument to his memory and, at his own request, had his own epitaph engraved upon it:

> Life is a jest; and all things show it.
> I thought so once; but now I know it.

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The Shepherd's Week

Thursday; or, The Spell

Hobnelia, seated in a dreary vale,
In pensive mood rehears'd her piteous tale,
Her piteous tale the winds in sighs bemoan,
And pining Echo answers groan for groan.
I rue the day, a rueful day, I trow,
The woeful day, a day indeed of woe!
When Lubberkin to town his cattle drove,
A maiden fine bedight[1] he hapt to love;
The maiden fine bedight his love retains,
And for the village he forsakes the plains.
Return, my Lubberkin, these ditties hear;
Spells will I try, and spells shall ease my care.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,

[1] arrayed; bedecked.

And turn me thrice around, around, around.
When first the year, I heard the cuckoo sing,
And call with welcome note the budding spring,
I straightway set a-running with such haste,
Deb'rah that won the smock, scarce ran so fast.
Till spent for lack of breath, quite weary grown,
Upon a rising bank I sat adown,
Then doff'd my shoe, and by my troth, I swear,
Therein I spy'd this yellow frizzled hair,
As like to Lubberkin's in curl and hue,
As if upon his comely pate it grew.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
At eve last Midsummer no sleep I sought,
But to the field a bag of hemp-seed brought,
I scatter'd round the seed on ev'ry side,
And three times in a trembling accent cry'd,
"This hemp-seed with my virgin hand I sow;
Who shall my true-love be, the crop shall mow."
I straight look'd back, and if my eyes speak truth,
With his keen scythe behind me came the youth.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind
Their paramours with mutual chirpings find;
I rearly[1] rose, just at the break of day,
Before the sun had chas'd the stars away;
A-field I went, amid the morning dew
To milk my kine (for so should huswives do);
Thee first I spy'd, and the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune shall our true-love be;
See, Lubberkin, each bird his partner take,
And canst thou then thy sweetheart dear forsake?
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
Last May Day fair I search'd to find a snail
That might my secret lover's name reveal;
Upon a gooseberry-bush a snail I found,
For always snails near sweetest fruit abound.
I seiz'd the vermin, home I quickly sped,

[1] early.

And on the hearth the milk-white embers spread:
Slow crawl'd the snail, and if I right can spell,
In the soft ashes mark'd a curious L:
Oh, may this wondrous omen lucky prove!
For L is found in "Lubberkin" and "Love."
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
Two hazel-nuts I threw into the flame,
And to each nut I gave a sweetheart's name.
This with the loudest bounce me sore amaz'd,
That in a flame of brightest colour blaz'd.
As blaz'd the nut so may thy passion grow,
For 't was thy nut that did so brightly glow.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
As peascods once I pluck'd, I chanc'd to see
One that was closely fill'd with three times three,
Which when I cropp'd I safely home convey'd,
And o'er my door the spell in secret laid.
My wheel I turn'd, and sung a ballad new,
While from the spindle I the fleeces drew;
The latch mov'd up, when who should first come in,
But in his proper person—Lubberkin!
I broke my yarn surpris'd the sight to see,
Sure sign that he would break his word with me.
Eftsoons I join'd it with my wonted slight,
So may again his love with mine unite!
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
This lady-fly I take from off the grass,
Whose spotted back might scarlet red surpass.
"Fly, lady-bird, north, south, or east or west,
Fly where the man is found that I love best."
He leaves my hand, see, to the west he's flown,
To call my true-love from the faithless town.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
I pare this pippin round and round again,
My shepherd's name to flourish on the plain.
I fling th' unbroken paring o'er my head,
Upon the grass a perfect L is read;

Yet on my heart a fairer L is seen
Than what the paring marks upon the green.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
This pippin shall another trial make.
See from the core two kernels brown I take;
This on my cheek for Lubberkin is worn,
And Boobyclod on t' other side is borne;
But Boobyclod soon drops upon the ground,
A certain token that his love's unsound,
While Lubberkin sticks firmly to the last;
Oh were his lips to mine but join'd so fast!
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
As Lubberkin once slept beneath a tree,
I twitch'd his dangling garter from his knee;
He wist not when the hempen string I drew,
Now mine I quickly doff of inkle[1] blue;
Together fast I tie the garters twain,
And while I knit the knot repeat this strain.
"Three times a true-love's knot I tie secure,
Firm be the knot, firm may his love endure."
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
As I was wont, I trudg'd last market-day
To town, with new-laid eggs preserv'd in hay.
I made my market long before 'twas night,
My purse grew heavy and my basket light.
Straight to the 'pothecary's shop I went,
And in love-powder all my money spent;
Behap what will, next Sunday after prayers,
When to the alehouse Lubberkin repairs,
These golden flies into his mug I'll throw,
And soon the swain with fervent love shall glow.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice around, around, around.
But hold—our Lightfoot barks, and cocks his ears,
O'er yonder stile see Lubberkin appears.
He comes, he comes! Hobnelia's not bewray'd,
Nor shall she crown'd with willow die a maid.

[1] a kind of line tape.

He vows, he swears, he'll give me a green gown,
Oh dear! I fall adown, adown, adown!

(1714)

Trivia

BOOK III

Of Walking the Streets by Night

O Trivia, Goddess, leave these low abodes,
And traverse o'er the wide ethereal roads,
Celestial Queen, put on thy robes of light,
Now Cynthia named, fair regent of the Night.
At sight of thee the villain sheaths his sword,
Nor scales the wall, to steal the wealthy hoard.
O may thy silver lamp from heav'n's high bow'r
Direct my footsteps in the midnight hour!
When night first bids the twinkling stars appear,
Or with her cloudy vest inwraps the air,
Then swarms the busy street; with caution tread,
Where the shop-windows falling threat thy head;
Now lab'rers home return, and join their strength
To bear the tott'ring plank, or ladder's length;
Still fix thy eyes intent upon the throng,
And as the passes open, wind along.
Where the fair columns of St. Clement stand,
Whose straiten'd bounds encroach upon the Strand;
Where the low penthouse bows the walker's head,
And the rough pavement wounds the yielding tread;
Where not a post protects the narrow space,
And strung in twines, combs dangle in thy face;
Summon at once thy courage, rouse thy care,
Stand firm, look back, be resolute, beware.
Forth issuing from steep lanes, the collier's steeds
Drag the black load; another cart succeeds,
Team follows team, crowds heap'd on crowds appear,
And wait impatient, 'till the road grow clear.
Now all the pavement sounds with trampling feet,
And the mixt hurry barricades the street.
Entangled here, the wagon's lengthen'd team

Cracks the tough harness: here a pond'rous beam
Lies overturn'd athwart; for slaughter fed
Here lowing bullocks raise their horned head.
Now oaths grow loud, with coaches coaches jar,
And the smart blow provokes the sturdy war;
From the high box they whirl the thong around,
And with the twining lash their shins resound:
Their rage ferments, more dang'rous wounds they try,
And the blood gushes down their painful eye,
And now on foot the frowning warriors light,
And with their pond'rous fists renew the fight;
Blow answers blow, their cheeks are smear'd with blood,
'Till down they fall, and grappling roll in mud.
So when two boars, in wild Ytene[1] bred,
Or on Westphalia's fatt'ning chestnuts fed,
Gnash their sharp tusks, and rous'd with equal fire,
Dispute the reign of some luxurious mire;
In the black flood they wallow o'er and o'er,
'Till their arm'd jaws distill with foam and gore.

Where the mob gathers, swiftly shoot along,
Nor idly mingle in the noisy throng.
Lur'd by the silver hilt, amid the swarm,
The subtle artist will thy side disarm.
Nor is thy flaxen wig with safety worn;
High on the shoulder, in a basket borne,
Lurks the sly boy; whose hand to rapine bred,
Plucks off the curling honours of thy head.
Here dives the skulking thief, with practis'd sleight,
And unfelt fingers make thy pocket light.
Where's now thy watch, with all its trinkets, flown?
And thy late snuff-box is no more thy own.
But lo! his bolder thefts some tradesman spies,
Swift from his prey the scudding lurcher[2] flies;
Dext'rous he 'scapes the coach with nimble bounds,
Whilst ev'ry honest tongue "stop thief" resounds.
So speeds the wily fox, alarm'd by fear,
Who lately filch'd the turkey's callow care;
Hounds following hounds grow louder as he flies,
And injur'd tenants join the hunter's cries.

[1] New Forest in Hampshire, anciently so called.—*Gay.*
[2] a petty thief.

Breathless he stumbling falls: ill-fated boy!
Why did not honest work thy youth employ?
Seiz'd by rough hands, he's dragg'd amid the rout,
And stretch'd beneath the pump's incessant spout:
Or plung'd in miry ponds, he gasping lies,
Mud chokes his mouth, and plasters o'er his eyes.
Let not the ballad-singer's shrilling strain
Amid the swarm thy list'ning ear detain:
Guard well thy pocket; for these sirens stand,
To aid the labours of the diving hand;
Confed'rate in the cheat, they draw the throng,
And cambric handkerchiefs reward the song.
But soon as coach or cart drives rattling on,
The rabble part, in shoals they backward run.
So Jove's loud bolts the mingled war divide,
And Greece and Troy retreat on either side.
If the rude throng pour on with furious pace,
And hap to break thee from a friend's embrace,
Stop short; nor struggle through the crowd in vain,
But watch with careful eye the passing train.
Yet I (perhaps too fond[1]) if chance the tide
Tumultuous bear my partner from my side,
Impatient venture back; despising harm,
I force my passage where the thickest swarm.
Thus his lost bride the Trojan sought in vain
Through night, and arms, and flames, and hills of slain.[2]
Thus Nisus wander'd o'er the pathless grove,
To find the brave companion of his love,
The pathless grove in vain he wanders o'er:[3]
Euryalus, alas! is now no more.
That walker, who regardless of his pace,
Turns oft to pore upon the damsel's face,
From side to side by thrusting elbows tost,
Shall strike his aching breast against the post;
Or water, dash'd from fishy stalls, shall stain

[1] foolish.

[2] Æneas seeking his bride Creusa in the destruction of Troy, as told in the second book of the "Æneid."

[3] Nisus, during the war with Turnus, sallied forth with Euryalus in search of Æneas. Euryalus was slain by Volscens, whom Nisus slew; but Nisus himself was overpowered and killed.

His hapless coat with spirts of scaly rain.
But if unwarily he chance to stray,
Where twirling turnstiles intercept the way,
The thwarting passenger shall force them round,
And beat the wretch half breathless to the ground.
 Let constant vigilance thy footsteps guide,
And wary circumspection guard thy side;
Then shalt thou walk unharm'd the dang'rous night,
Nor need th' officious link-boy's smoky light.
Thou never wilt attempt to cross the road,
Where alehouse benches rest the porter's load,
Grievous to heedless shins; nor barrow's wheel,
That bruises oft the truant school-boy's heel,
Behind thee rolling, with insidious pace,
Shall mark thy stocking with a miry trace.
Let not thy vent'rous steps approach too nigh,
Where gaping wide, low steepy cellars lie;
Should thy shoe wrench aside, down, down you fall,
And overturn the scolding huckster's stall,
The scolding huckster shall not o'er thee moan,
But pence exact for nuts and pears o'erthrown.
 Though you through cleanlier alleys wind by day,
To shun the hurries of the public way,
Yet ne'er to those dark paths by night retire;
Mind only safety, and contemn the mire.
Then no impervious courts thy haste detain,
Nor sneering ale-wives bid thee turn again.
 Where Lincoln's-Inn, wide space, is rail'd around,
Cross not with vent'rous step; there oft is found
The lurking thief, who while the day-light shone,
Made the walls echo with his begging tone:
That crutch which late compassion mov'd, shall wound
Thy bleeding head, and fell thee to the ground.
Though thou art tempted by the link-man's[1] call,
Yet trust him not along the lonely wall;
In the midway he'll quench the flaming brand,
And share the booty with the pilf'ring band.
Still keep the public streets, where oily rays
Shot from the crystal lamp, o'erspread the ways.
 Happy Augusta! law-defended town!

[1] a man employed to carry a link or torch.

Here no dark lanthorns[1] shade the villain's frown;
No Spanish jealousies thy lanes infest,
Nor Roman vengeance stabs th' unwary breast;
Here tyranny ne'er lifts her purple hand,
But liberty and justice guard the land;
No bravos here profess the bloody trade,
Nor is the church the murd'rer's refuge made.
Let not the chairman,[2] with assuming stride,
Press near the wall, and rudely thrust thy side:
The laws have set him bounds; his servile feet
Should ne'er encroach where posts defend the street.
Yet who the footman's arrogance can quell,
Whose flambeau gilds the sashes of Pell-mell,
When in long rank a train of torches flame,
To light the midnight visits of the dame?
Others, perhaps, by happier guidance led,
May where the chairman rests, with safety tread;
Whene'er I pass, their poles unseen below,
Make my knee tremble with the jarring blow.
If wheels bar up the road, where streets are crost,
With gentle words the coachman's ear accost:
He ne'er the threat, or harsh command obeys,
But with contempt the spatter'd shoe surveys.
Now man with utmost fortitude thy soul,
To cross the way where carts and coaches roll;
Yet do not in thy hardy skill confide,
Nor rashly risk the kennel's spacious stride;
Stay till afar the distant wheel you hear,
Like dying thunder in the breaking air;
Thy foot will slide upon the miry stone,
And passing coaches crush thy tortur'd bone,
Or wheels enclose the road; on either hand
Pent round with perils, in the midst you stand,
And call for aid in vain; the coachman swears,
And car-men drive, unmindful of thy prayers.
Where wilt thou turn? ah! whither wilt thou fly?
On ev'ry side the pressing spokes are nigh.
So sailors, while Charybdis' gulf they shun,

[1] Lanthorn is a popular etymology for lantern, since lanterns were formerly almost always made of horn.—*N E.D*
[2] a sedan-chairman.

Amaz'd, on Scylla's craggy dangers run.
Be sure observe where brown Ostrea[1] stands,
Who boasts her shelly ware from Wallfleet sands;
There may'st thou pass, with safe unmiry feet,
Where the rais'd pavement leads athwart the street.
If where Fleet-ditch with muddy current flows,
You chance to roam; where oyster-tubs in rows
Are rang'd beside the posts; there stay thy haste,
And with the sav'ry fish indulge thy taste:
The damsel's knife the gaping shell commands,
While the salt liquor streams between her hands.
The man had sure a palate cover'd o'er
With brass or steel, that on the rocky shore
First broke the oozy oyster's pearly coat,
And risk'd the living morsel down his throat.
What will not lux'ry taste? Earth, sea, and air
Are daily ransack'd for the bill of fare.
Blood stuff'd in skins is British Christians' food,
And France robs marshes of the croaking brood;
Spongy morells[2] in strong ragousts[3] are found,
And in the soup the slimy snail is drown'd.
When from high spouts the dashing torrents fall,
Ever be watchful to maintain the wall;
For shouldst thou quit thy ground, the rushing throng
Will with impetuous fury drive along;
All press to gain those honours thou hast lost,
And rudely shove thee far without the post.
Then to retrieve the shed you strive in vain,
Draggled all o'er, and soak'd in floods of rain.
Yet rather bear the show'r, and toils of mud,
Than in the doubtful quarrel risk thy blood.
O think on Œdipus' detested state,
And by his woes be warn'd to shun thy fate.
Where three roads join'd, he met his sire unknown;
(Unhappy sire, but more unhappy son!)
Each claim'd the way, their swords the strife decide,
The hoary monarch fell, he groan'd and dy'd!
Hence sprung the fatal plague that thin'd thy reign,

[1] Latin for "oyster."
[2] A morell is an edible fungus of the genus Morchella.—*N.E.D.*
[3] ragouts.

Thy cursed incest! and thy children slain!
Hence wert thou doom'd in endless night to stray
Through Theban streets, and cheerless grope thy way.
Contemplate, mortal, on thy fleeting years;
See, with black train the funeral pomp appears!
Whether some heir attends in sable state,
And mourns with outward grief a parent's fate;
Or the fair virgin, nipt in beauty's bloom,
A crowd of lovers follow to her tomb.
Why is the hearse with 'scutcheons blazon'd round,
And with the nodding plume of ostrich crown'd?
No: The dead know it not, nor profit gain;
It only serves to prove the living vain.
How short is life! how frail is human trust!
Is all this pomp for laying dust to dust?
Where the nail'd hoop defends the painted stall,
Brush not thy sweeping skirt too near the wall;
Thy heedless sleeve will drink the coloured oil,
And spot indelible thy pocket soil.
Has not wise nature strung the legs and feet
With firmest nerves, design'd to walk the street?
Has she not given us hands to grope aright,
Amidst the frequent dangers of the night?
And think'st thou not the double nostril meant,
To warn from oily woes by previous scent?
Who can the various city frauds recite,
With all the petty rapines of the night?
Who now the guinea-dropper's bait regards,
Trick'd by the sharper's dice, or juggler's cards?
Why should I warn thee ne'er to join the fray,
Where the sham-quarrel interrupts the way?
Lives there in these our days so soft a clown,
Brav'd by the bully's oaths, or threat'ning frown?
I need not strict enjoin the pocket's care,
When from the crowded play thou lead'st the fair;
Who has not here, or watch, or snuff-box lost,
Or handkerchiefs that India's shuttle boast?
O! may thy virtue guard thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts, and dark abodes,
The harlots' guileful paths, who nightly stand,
Where Katherine Street descends into the Strand.

Say, vagrant Muse, their wiles and subtile arts,
To lure the strangers' unsuspecting hearts;
So shall our youth on healthful sinews tread,
And city cheeks grow warm with rural red.
'Tis she who nightly strolls with saunt'ring pace,
No stubborn stays her yielding shape embrace;
Beneath the lamp her tawdry ribbons glare,
The new-scour'd manteau, and the slattern air;
High-draggled petticoats her travels show
And hollow cheeks with artful blushes glow;
With flatt'ring sounds she soothes the cred'lous ear,
My noble captain! charmer! love! my dear!
In riding-hood near tavern-doors she plies,
Or muffled pinners[1] hide her livid eyes.
With empty bandbox she delights to range,
And feigns a distant errand from the 'Change;
Nay, she will oft the Quaker's hood profane,
And trudge demure the rounds of Drury-lane.
She darts from sarsnet[2] ambush wily leers,
Twitches thy sleeve, or with familiar airs
Her fan will pat thy cheek; these snares disdain,
Nor gaze behind thee, when she turns again.
I knew a yeoman, who for thirst of gain,
To the great city drove from Devon's plain
His num'rous lowing herd; his herds he sold,
And his deep leathern pocket bagg'd with gold;
Drawn by a fraudful nymph, he gaz'd, he sigh'd;
Unmindful of his home, and distant bride,
She leads the willing victim to his doom,
Through winding alleys to her cobweb room,
Thence through the street he reels from post to post,
Valiant with wine, nor knows his treasure lost.
The vagrant wretch th' assembled watchmen spies,
He waves his hanger, and their poles defies;
Deep in the round-house[3] pent, all night he snores,
And the next morn in vain his fate deplores.
Ah hapless swain, unus'd to pains and ills!
Canst thou forego roast-beef for nauseous pills?

[1] A pinner is a coif with two long flaps, one on each side, pinned on and hanging down, and sometimes fastened at the breast.—*N.E.D.*
[2] Sarsenet is a very fine and soft silk material. [3] a lock-up.

How wilt thou lift to heav'n thy eyes and hands,
When the long scroll the surgeon's fees demands!
Or else (ye Gods avert that worst disgrace)
Thy ruin'd nose falls level with thy face,
Then shall thy wife thy loathsome kiss disdain,
And wholesome neighbours from thy mug refrain.
 Yet there are watchmen, who with friendly light
Will teach thy reeling steps to tread aright;
For sixpence will support thy helpless arm,
And home conduct thee, safe from nightly harm;
But if they shake their lanthorns, from afar
To call their brethren to confed'rate war
When rakes resist their pow'r; if hapless you
Should chance to wander with the scouring crew;
Though fortune yield thee captive, ne'er despair,
But seek the constable's consid'rate ear;
He will reverse the watchman's harsh decree,
Moved by the rhet'ric of a silver fee.
Thus would you gain some fav'rite courtier's word;
Fee not the petty clerks, but bribe my Lord.
 Now is the time that rakes their revels keep;
Kindlers of riot, enemies of sleep.
His scatter'd pence the flying Nicker[1] flings,
And with the copper show'r the casement rings.
Who has not heard the Scourer's[2] midnight fame?
Who has not trembled at the Mohock's name?
Was there a watchman took his hourly rounds,
Safe from their blows, or new-invented wounds?
I pass their desp'rate deeds, and mischiefs done
Where from Snow-hill black steepy torrents run:
How matrons, hoop'd within the hogshead's womb,
Were tumbled furious thence, the rolling tomb
O'er the stones thunders, bounds from side to side.
So Regulus to save his country dy'd.[3]
 Where a dim gleam that paly lanthorn throws

[1] Gentlemen who delight to break windows with half-pence.—*Gay.*

[2] One who makes a practice of roistering through the streets at night, beating the watch, breaking windows, etc.—*N.E.D.*

[3] One of the stories is that Regulus, on his return to Carthage after a purposely unsuccessful embassy to Rome, was placed by the Carthaginians in a chest covered on the inside with iron nails, and then died. See "Winter," l. 513, n.

O'er the mid pavement, heapy rubbish grows;
Or arched vaults their gaping jaws extend,
Or the dark caves to common-shores descend.
Oft by the winds extinct the signal lies,
Or smother'd in the glimmering socket dies,
Ere night has half roll'd round her ebon throne;
In the wide gulph the shatter'd coach o'erthrown
Sinks with the snorting steeds; the reins are broke,
And from the crackling axle flies the spoke.
So when fam'd Eddystone's far-shooting ray,
That led the sailor through the stormy way,
Was from its rocky roots by billows torn,
And the high turret in the whirlwind borne,
Fleets bulg'd their sides against the craggy land,
And pitchy ruins blacken'd all the strand.[1]

Who then through night would hire the harness'd steed,
And who would choose the rattling wheel for speed?
But hark! distress with screaming voice draws nigh'r,
And wakes the slumb'ring street with cries of fire.
At first a glowing red enwraps the skies,
And borne by winds the scatt'ring sparks arise;
From beam to beam the fierce contagion spreads;
The spiry flames now lift aloft their heads,
Through the burst sash a blazing deluge pours,
And splitting tiles descend in rattling show'rs.
Now with thick crowds th' enlighten'd pavement swarms,
The fire-man sweats beneath his crooked arms,
A leathern casque his vent'rous head defends,
Boldly he climbs where thickest smoke ascends;
Mov'd by the mother's streaming eyes and pray'rs,
The helpless infant through the flame he bears,
With no less virtue, than through hostile fire
The Dardan hero[2] bore his aged sire.
See forceful engines spout their levell'd streams,
To quench the blaze that runs along the beams;
The grappling hook plucks rafters from the walls,
And heaps on heaps the smoky ruin falls.
Blown by strong winds the fiery tempest roars,
Bears down new walls, and pours along the floors;

[1] Eddystone lighthouse was destroyed in a storm on November 27, 1703.
[2] the Trojan hero, Æneas.

The heav'ns are all ablaze, the face of night
Is cover'd with a sanguine dreadful light:
'Twas such a light involv'd thy tow'rs, O Rome,
The dire presage of mighty Cæsar's doom,
When the sun veil'd in rust his mourning head,
And frightful prodigies the skies o'erspread.
Hark! the drum thunders! far, ye crowds, retire:
Behold! the ready match is tipt with fire,
The nitrous store is laid, the smutty train
With running blaze awakes the barrell'd grain;
Flames sudden wrap the walls; with sullen sound
The shatter'd pile sinks on the smoky ground.
So when the years shall have revolv'd the date,
Th' inevitable hour of Naples' fate,
Her sapp'd foundations shall with thunders shake,
And heave and toss upon the sulph'rous lake;
Earth's womb at once the fiery flood shall rend,
And in th' abyss her plunging tow'rs descend.
 Consider, reader, what fatigues I've known,
The toils, the perils of the wintry town;
What riots seen, what bustling crowds I bor'd,
How oft I cross'd where carts and coaches roar'd;
Yet shall I bless my labours, if mankind
Their future safety from my dangers find.
Thus the bold traveller, (inur'd to toil,
Whose steps have printed Asia's desert soil,
The barb'rous Arabs haunt; or shiv'ring crost
Dark Greenland's mountains of eternal frost;
Whom Providence in length of years restores
To the wish'd harbour of his native shores;)
Sets forth his journals to the public view,
To caution, by his woes, the wand'ring crew.
 And now complete my gen'rous labours lie,
Finish'd, and ripe for immortality.
Death shall entomb in dust this mould'ring frame,
But never reach th' eternal part, my fame.
When W—— [1] and G——,[1] mighty names, are dead;
Or but at Chelsea under custards read;
When critics crazy bandboxes repair,
And tragedies, turn'd rockets, bounce in air;

[1] Ward and Gibbon.—*Faber.*

High-rais'd on Fleet-Street posts, consign'd to fame,
This work shall shine, and walkers bless my name.

(1710)

My Own Epitaph

LIFE is a jest; and all things show it.
I thought so once; but now I know it.

(1720)

Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Ey'd Susan

A BALLAD

ALL in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-ey'd Susan came aboard.
"Oh! where shall I my true love find!
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew?"

William, who high upon the yard,
Rock'd with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sigh'd and cast his eyes below:
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,
And, (quick as lightning,) on the deck he stands.

So the sweet lark, high-pois'd in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast,
(If, chance, his mate's shrill call he hear)
And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet,
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet.

"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain;
Let me kiss off that falling tear,

We only part to meet again.
Change, as ye list, ye winds; my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

"Believe not what the landmen say,
Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind:
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In ev'ry port a mistress find.
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,
For thou art present wheresoe'er I go.

"If to far India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in di'monds bright,
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory, so white.
Thus ev'ry beauteous object that I view,
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

"Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet safe from harms,
William shall to his Dear return.
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's eye."

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,
The sails their swelling bosom spread,
No longer must she stay aboard:
They kiss'd, she sigh'd, he hung his head;
Her less'ning boat, unwilling rows to land:
"Adieu!" she cries: and wav'd her lily hand.

(1720)

The Fox at the Point of Death

A FOX, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, sick and faint, expiring lay;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age disarm'd his mumbling jaw.
His num'rous race around him stand

To learn their dying sire's command;
He rais'd his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone.
"Ah sons, from evil ways depart,
My crimes lie heavy on my heart.
See, see, the murder'd geese appear!
Why are those bleeding turkeys there?
Why all around this cackling train,
Who haunt my ears for chickens slain?"
The hungry foxes round them star'd,
And for the promis'd feast prepar'd.
"Where, sir, is all this dainty cheer?
Nor turkey, goose, nor hen is here:
These are the phantoms of your brain,
And your sons lick their lips in vain."
"O gluttons," says the drooping sire,
"Restrain inordinate desire;
Your liqu'rish taste you shall deplore,
When peace of conscience is no more.
Does not the hound betray our pace,
And gins and guns destroy our race?
Thieves dread the searching eye of pow'r,
And never feel the quiet hour.
Old age, (which few of us shall know,)
Now puts a period to my woe.
Would you true happiness attain,
Let honesty your passions rein;
So live in credit and esteem,
And, the good name you lost, redeem."
"The counsel's good," a fox replies,
"Could we perform what you advise.
Think, what our ancestors have done;
A line of thieves from son to son;
To us descends the long disgrace,
And infamy hath mark'd our race.
Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,
Honest in thought, in word, and deed,
Whatever hen-roost is decreas'd,
We shall be thought to share the feast.
The change shall never be believ'd,
A lost good name is ne'er retriev'd."

"Nay, then," replies the feeble fox,
"(But hark! I hear a hen that clocks)[1]
Go, but be mod'rate in your food;
A chicken, too, might do me good."

(1727)

[1] clucks.

John Byrom

1692–1763

JOHN BYROM, the son of Edward Byrom, who belonged to a mercantile family, was born at Kersall Cell, Broughton, near Manchester, on February 29, 1692. He attended the Merchant Taylors' School, and in 1708 entered Trinity College, Cambridge. The following year he was elected scholar, took his B.A. in 1712, his M.A. in 1715, and was appointed fellow of his college in 1714. While at college he contributed to *The Spectator* two or three essays and, for the issue of October 6, 1714, a playful pastoral called "Colin and Phebe." In 1716 he traveled abroad and studied medicine at Montpelier. On his return home, he was called "Doctor" by his friends, though he had no degree and wisely, perhaps, declined to practice medicine at Manchester. He settled in London in 1718 and gave himself up to the invention of a system of shorthand. He issued proposals for publishing his system in 1723, and read two papers on the subject before the Royal Society, of which he was made a fellow in 1724. Having met William Law, the author of "A Serious Call," in 1729, from that time he became a devoted admirer of Law and interested himself in making verse paraphrases of Law's rather unpoetic material. At the same time he became acquainted with Bishop Butler, David Hartley, and Wesley. In 1740 he inherited the family estates and was free to give up his teaching of shorthand, but he secured from Parliament the sole right of publishing and teaching his system for twenty-one years. Two of his best poems, founded on Law's religious writings, were "An Epistle to a Gentleman of the Temple" (1749) and a letter on "Enthusiasm" (1752). On September 26, 1763, he died. The first edition of his poems was not published till 1773. It was republished in 1814 with a life and notes.

EDITIONS

The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom. Edited by R. Parkinson. 4 vols. 1854–7.

The Poems of John Byrom. Edited by A. W. Ward. 3 vols in 5. 1894–1912.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Stephen, L.: "Studies of a Bibliographer," Vol. I. 1898.

A Pastoral

My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent,
When Phebe went with me wherever I went;
Ten thousand sweet pleasures I felt in my breast:
Sure never fond shepherd like Colin was blest!
But now she is gone, and has left me behind,
What a marvellous change on a sudden I find!
When things were as fine as could possibly be,
I thought 'twas the spring; but alas! it was she.

With such a companion to tend a few sheep,
To rise up and play, or to lie down and sleep:
I was so good-humour'd, so cheerful and gay,
My heart was as light as a feather all day.
But now I so cross and so peevish am grown,
So strangely uneasy, as never was known.
My fair one is gone, and my joys are all drown'd,
And my heart,—I am sure it weighs more than a pound.

The fountain, that wont to run sweetly along,
And dance to soft murmurs the pebbles among,
Thou know'st little Cupid, if Phebe was there,
'Twas pleasure to look at, 'twas music to hear.
But now she is absent, I walk by its side,
And still, as it murmurs, do nothing but chide:
"Must you be so cheerful, while I go in pain?
Peace there with your bubbling, and hear me complain."

When my lambkins around me would oftentimes play,
And when Phebe and I were as joyful as they,
How pleasant their sporting, how happy the time,
When spring, love, and beauty, were all in their prime!
But now, in their frolics when by me they pass,
I fling at their fleeces an handful of grass;
"Be still then," I cry, "for it makes me quite mad
To see you so merry, while I am so sad."

My dog I was ever well pleased to see
Come wagging his tail to my fair one and me;
And Phebe was pleas'd too, and to my dog said,

"Come hither, poor fellow," and patted his head.
But now, when he's fawning, I with a sour look
Cry, "Sirrah," and give him a blow with my crook;
And I'll give him another; for why should not Tray
Be as dull as his master, when Phebe's away?

When walking with Phebe, what sights have I seen!
How fair was the flower, how fresh was the green!
What a lovely appearance the trees and the shade,
The corn-fields and hedges, and ev'rything made!
But now she has left me, though all are still there,
They none of 'em now so delightful appear:
'Twas nought but the magic, I find, of her eyes,
Made so many beautiful prospects arise.

Sweet music went with us both all the wood through,
The lark, linnet, throstle, and nightingale too;
Winds over us whisper'd, flocks by us did bleat,
And "chirp" went the grasshopper under our feet.
But now she is absent, though still they sing on,
The woods are but lonely, the melody's gone:
Her voice in the consort, as now I have found,
Gave ev'rything else its agreeable sound.

Rose, what is become of thy delicate hue?
And where is the violet's beautiful blue?
Does aught of its sweetness the blossom beguile?
That meadow, those daisies, why do they not smile?
Ah, Rivals! I see what it was that you drest,
And made yourselves fine for,—a place in her breast:
You put on your colours to pleasure her eye,
To be pluckt by her hand, on her bosom to die.

How slowly time creeps, till my Phebe return,
While amidst the soft zephyr's cool breezes I burn;
Methinks, if I knew whereabouts he would tread,
I could breathe on his wings, and 'twould melt down the lead.
Fly swifter, ye minutes, bring hither my dear,
And rest so much longer for't when she is here.

Ah Colin! old time is full of delay,
Nor will budge one foot faster for all thou canst say.

Will no pitying pow'r that hears me complain
Or cure my disquiet, or soften my pain?
To be cur'd, thou must, Colin, thy passion remove;
But what swain is so silly to live without love?
No, Deity, bid the dear nymph to return,
For ne'er was poor shepherd so sadly forlorn.
Ah, what shall I do? I shall die with despair;
Take heed, all ye swains, how you love one so fair.

(1714)

Extempore Verses

Long was the great Figg by the prize fighting swains
Sole monarch acknowledg'd of Marybone Plains;
To the towns, far and near, did his valour extend,
And swam down the river from Thame to Gravesend;
Where liv'd Mr. Sutton, pipe-maker by trade,
Who, hearing that Figg was thought such a stout blade,
Resolv'd to put in for a share of his fame,
And so sent to challenge the champion of Thame.

With alternate advantage two trials had past,
When they fought out the rubbers on Wednesday last.
To see such a contest the house was so full,
There hardly was room left to thrust in your skull.
With a prelude of cudgels we first were saluted,
And two or three shoulders most handsomely fluted;[1]
'Till, wearied at last with inferior disasters,
All the company cry'd, "Come, the Masters! the Masters!"

Whereupon the bold Sutton first mounted the stage,
Made his honours, as usual, and yearn'd to engage;
Then Figg, with a visage so fierce and sedate,
Came and enter'd the list with his fresh-shaven pate.
Their arms were encircled by armigers[2] two,
With a red ribbon Sutton's and Figg's with a blue.

[1] scored, channeled, or grooved. [2] the seconds.

Thus adorn'd, the two heroes, 'twixt shoulder and elbow,
Shook hands, and went to 't, and the word it was "Bilbo."[1]

Sure such a concern in the eyes of spectators
Was never yet seen in our amphitheatres:
Our Commons and Peers, from their several places,
To half an inch distance all pointed their faces;
While the rays of old Phœbus, that shot through the sky-light,
Seemed to make on the stage a new kind of twilight;
And the gods, without doubt, if one could but have seen 'em,
Were peeping there through to do justice between 'em.

Figg struck the first stroke, and with such a vast fury,
That he broke his huge weapon in twain, I assure you;
And, if his brave rival this blow had not warded,
His head from his shoulders had quite been discarded.
Figg arm'd him again, and they took t'other tilt,
And then Sutton's blade run away from its hilt.
The weapons were frighted, but as for the men,
In truth they ne'er minded, but at it again.

Such a force in their blows, you'd have thought it a wonder
Every stroke they receiv'd did not cleave them asunder;
Yet so great was their courage, so equal their skill,
That they both seem'd as safe as a thief in a mill:
While in doubtful attention Dame Victory stood,
And which side to take could not tell for her blood,
But remain'd, like the ass 'twixt two bottles[2] of hay,
Without ever moving an inch either way.

Till Jove to the gods signified his intention
In a speech that he made them, too tedious to mention;
But the upshot on't was, that, at that very bout,
From a wound in Figg's side the hot blood spouted out.
Her ladyship then seem'd to think the case plain;
But Figg stepping forth with a sullen disdain,
Show'd the gash, and appeal'd to the company round,
If his own broken sword had not given him the wound?

[1] the signal for the slaughter to begin; originally the name of a fine sword.
[2] bundles.

That bruises and wounds a man's spirit should touch,
With danger so little, with honour so much!—
Well, they both took a dram, and return'd to the battle,
And with a fresh fury they made the swords rattle;
While Sutton's right arm was observed to bleed
By a touch from his rival,—so Jove had decreed,—
Just enough for to show that his blood was not ichor,
But made up, like Figg's, of the common red liquor.

Again they both rush'd with so equal a fire on,
That the company cry'd: "Hold, enough of cold iron!
To the quarter staff now, lads." So first having dram'd it,
They took to their wood, and i' faith never sham'd it.
The first bout they had was so fair and so handsome,
That, to make a fair bargain, 'twas worth a king's ransom;
And Sutton such bangs to his neighbour imparted,
Would have made any fibres but Figg's to have smarted.

Then after that bout they went on to another,—
But the matter must end on some fashion or other:
So Jove told the gods he had made a decree,
That Figg should hit Sutton a stroke on the knee.
Though Sutton, disabled as soon as he hit him,
Would still have fought on, but Jove would not permit him.
'Twas his fate, not his fault, that constrain'd him to yield:
And thus the great Figg became lord of the field.

Now, after such men, who can bear to be told
Of your Roman and Greek puny heroes of old?
To compare such poor dogs as Alcides and Theseus
To Sutton and Figg would be very facetious.
Were Hector himself, with Apollo to back him,
To encounter with Sutton,—zooks, how he would thwack him!
Or Achilles, though old mother Thetis had dipt him,
With Figg—odds my life! how he would have unript[1] him!

To Cæsar and Pompey, for want of things juster,
We compare these brave boys; but 'twill never pass muster.

[1] slit up by ripping.

Did those mighty fellows e'er fight hand to fist once?
No, I thank you; they kept at a suitable distance.
What is Pompey the Great, with his armour begirt,
To the much greater Sutton, who fought in his shirt?
Or is Figg to be pair'd with a Cap-a-pee Roman,
Who scorn'd any fence but a jolly abdomen?

(1725)

Careless Content

I AM content, I do not care,
Wag as it will the world for me;
When fuss and fret was all my fare,
It got no ground as I could see:
So, when away my caring went,
I counted cost, and was content.

With more of thanks, and less of thought,
I strive to make my matters meet;
To seek, what ancient sages sought,
Physic and food in sour and sweet;
To take what passes in good part,
And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With good and gentle-humour'd hearts
I choose to chat where'er I come,
Whate'er the subject be that starts;
But if I get among the glum,
I hold my tongue to tell the troth,
And keep my breath to cool my broth.

For chance or change, of peace or pain,
For Fortune's favour, or her frown,
For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
I never dodge, nor up nor down;
But swing what way the ship shall swim,
Or tack about, with equal trim.

I suit not where I shall not speed,
Nor trace the turn of ev'ry tide;

If simple sense will not succeed,
I make no bustling, but abide:
For shining wealth, or scaring woe,
I force no friend, I fear no foe.

Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
Of "they're-i'-th'-wrong" and "we're-i'-th'-right,"
I shun the rancours, and the routs;
And, wishing well to every wight,
Whatever turn the matter takes,
I deem it all but ducks and drakes.

With whom I feast I do not fawn,
Nor if the folks should flout me, faint;
If wonted welcome be withdrawn,
I cook no kind of a complaint,—
With none dispos'd to disagree;
But like them best, who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule
How all my betters should behave;
But fame shall find me no man's fool,
Nor to a set of men a slave;
I love a friendship free and frank,
But hate to hang upon a hank.[1]

Fond of a true and trusty tie,
I never loose where'er I link;
Though, if a bus'ness budges by,
I talk thereon just as I think:
My word, my work, my heart, my hand,
Still on a side together stand.

If names or notions make a noise,
Whatever hap the question hath,
The point impartially I poise,
And read or write, but without wrath:
For, should I burn or break my brains,
Pray, who will pay me for my pains?

[1] A loop of string . . . used to fasten things together, or to **hang a thing** up by.—*N.E.D.*

I love my neighbour as myself,
 Myself like him too, by his leave;
Nor to his pleasure, pow'r, or pelf,
 Come I to crouch, as I conceive;
Dame Nature doubtless has design'd
A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,
 Mood it and brood it in your breast;
Or, if ye ween, for worldly stirs
 That man does right to mar his rest,
Let me be deft and debonair:
I am content, I do not care.

(Publ. 1773)

On the Origin of Evil

Evil, if rightly understood,
Is but the skeleton of good,
Divested of its flesh and blood.

While it remains without divorce
Within its hidden, secret source,
It is the good's own strength and force.

As bone has the supporting share
In human form divinely fair,
Although an evil when laid bare;

As light and air are fed by fire,
A shining good, while all conspire,
But,—separate,—dark, raging ire;

As hope and love arise from faith,
Which then admits no ill, nor hath;
But, if alone, it would be wrath;

Or any instance thought upon,
In which the evil can be none,
Till unity of good is gone;

So, by abuse of thought and skill
The greatest good, to wit, Free Will,
Becomes the origin of ill.

Thus, when rebellious angels fell,
The very Heav'n where good ones dwell
Became th' apostate spirits' hell.

Seeking, against eternal right,
A force without a love and light,
They found and felt its evil might.

Thus Adam, biting at their bait
Of good and evil when he ate,
Died to his first thrice-happy state;

Fell to the evils of this ball,
Which in harmonious union all
Were Paradise before his fall;

And, when the life of Christ in men
Revives its faded image, then
Will all be Paradise again.

(c. 1750)

Hymn for Christmas Day

CHRISTIANS, awake! salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born!
Rise, to adore the mystery of love,
Which hosts of angels chanted from above;
With them the joyful tidings first begun
Of God incarnate, and the Virgin's Son.
Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,
Who heard th' Angelic Herald's Voice: "Behold!
I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth
To you and all the nations upon earth;
This day hath God fulfill'd his promis'd word;
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.
In David's city, shepherds, ye shall find

The long foretold Redeemer of Mankind;
Wrapt up in swaddling-clothes, the Babe divine
Lies in a manger; this shall be your sign."
He spake, and straightway the Celestial Choir
In hymns of joy, unknown before, conspire;
The praises of redeeming love they sung,
And Heav'ns whole orb with hallelujahs rung.
"God's highest glory" was their anthem still,
"Peace upon earth, and mutual good-will!"
To Bethlehem straight th' enlightened Shepherds ran
To see the wonder God had wrought for man;
And found, with Joseph and the blessed Maid,
Her Son, the Saviour, in a manger laid.
Amaz'd, the wond'rous story they proclaim,
The first Apostles of his infant fame;
While Mary keeps and ponders in her heart
The heav'nly vision which the swains impart.
They to their flocks, still praising God, return,
And their glad hearts within their bosoms burn.
Let us, like these good shepherds, then, employ
Our grateful voices to proclaim the joy;
Like Mary, let us ponder in our mind
God's wond'rous love in saving lost mankind.
Artless and watchful as these favour'd swains,
While Virgin meekness in the heart remains,
Trace we the Babe, who has retriev'd our loss,
From his poor manger to his bitter cross;
Treading his steps, assisted by his grace,
'Till man's first heav'nly state again takes place!
Then, may we hope, th' Angelic Thrones among,
To sing, redeem'd, a glad triumphal song.
He that was born upon this joyful day
Around us all his glory shall display;
Sav'd by his love, incessant we shall sing
Of Angels and of Angel-Men the King.

(c. 1750)

John Hughes

1677–1720

JOHN HUGHES, the son of John Hughes, a clerk in the Hand-in-Hand Fire Office, Snowhill, London, was born in Marlborough, Wiltshire, on January 29, 1677. He was educated in a dissenting academy in Little Britain, London, where he was a contemporary of Isaac Watts. At the age of nineteen he wrote a tragedy called "Amalasont, Queen of the Goths," which was never acted and never got into print. While holding a position in the ordnance office, he brought out in 1706 "A Complete History of England . . . to the Death of William III," in three volumes. Two years later he published his translation of Fontenelle's "Dialogues of the Dead," made six years previously. An opera, "Calypso and Telemachus," was performed in 1712 at the Queen's Theatre, in Haymarket. He wrote for *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*, and with Sir Richard Blackmore a series of essays called "The Lay Monk," which was published in 1713–14. In 1715 he brought out in six volumes an edition of "The Works of Edmund Spenser." An appointment to the secretaryship to the commissioners of the peace in the Court of Chancery in 1717 made him independent for life. On February 17, 1720, his "Siege of Damascus" was acted at Drury Lane with great applause; but on that night he died. In 1735, his "Poems on Several Occasions, with Some Select Essays in Prose," edited by his brother-in-law, was published in two volumes.

EDITIONS

Anderson: "British Poets," Vol. VII. 1795.
Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. X. 1810.

The Picture

COME, my Muse, a Venus draw;
Not the same the Grecians saw,
By the fam'd Apelles wrought,
Beauteous offspring of his thought.
No fantastic goddess mine,
Fiction far she does outshine.
Queen of fancy! hither bring
On thy gaudy-feather'd wing

All the beauties of the spring.
Like the bee's industrious pains
To collect his golden gains,
So from ev'ry flow'r and plant
Gather first th' immortal paint.
Fetch me lilies, fetch me roses,
Daisies, violets, cowslip-posies,
Amaranthus, parrot-pride,
Woodbines, pinks, and what beside
Does th' embroider'd meads adorn,
Where the fawns and satyrs play
In the merry month of May.
Steal the blush of op'ning morn;
Borrow Cynthia's silver white,
When she shines at noon of night,
Free from clouds to veil her light.
Juno's bird his tail shall spread,
Iris' bow its colours shed,
All to deck this charming piece,
Far surpassing ancient Greece.
 First her graceful stature show,
Not too tall, nor yet too low.
Fat she must not be, nor lean;
Let her shape be straight and clean;
Small her waist, and thence increast,
Gently swells her rising breast.
 Next, in comely order trace
All the glories of her face.
Paint her neck of ivory,
Smiling cheeks, and forehead high,
Ruby lips, and sparkling eyes,
Whence resistless lightning flies.
 Foolish Muse! what hast thou done?
Scarce th' outlines are yet begun,
Ere thy pencil's thrown aside!
"'T is no matter," Love replied;
(Love's unlucky god stood by)
"At one stroke behold how I
Will th' unfinish'd draught supply."
 Smiling then he took his dart,
And drew her picture in my heart.

(1735)

Allan Ramsay

1684(5?)–1758

ALLAN RAMSAY was born probably on October 15, in 1684 or 1685, at Leadhills, parish of Crawford, Lanarkshire, Scotland, where his father was overseer to the Hopes of Hopeton. After a very elementary and somewhat uncertain education in his native village, he went to Edinburgh about 1700, and he entered into a five-year apprenticeship to a wig-maker in 1704. He seems to have succeeded in an occupation not altogether conducive to the writing of poetry, for he became a burgess in 1710, set up a shop of his own, and married in 1712. In this year he was one of the founders of the Easy Club, which furnished a willing audience for his poetry, sponsored the publication of his first printed poem in 1713, and gladly made him its poet laureate in 1715, the year in which the Club seems to have gone out of existence. With the publication of "Christ's Kirk on the Green" and "Scots Songs," in 1718, he first announced himself as author and publisher, though he kept up his wig-making establishment till about 1724, thereby furnishing, as it were, the outside as well as the inside of his customers' heads. He brought out collected editions of his poems in 1720 and 1721, with very profitable results. These were followed by "Fables and Tales" in 1722, with additions in 1730. Through 1724-27 he published three volumes of "The Tea-Table Miscellany" and two of "The Evergreen." His pastoral drama, "The Gentle Shepherd" (1725), was an instant success, and by 1750 had run into ten editions. Ramsay started the first circulating library in Scotland as part of his business. Further editions of his poems came out from 1728 to 1730, but after this latter date he ceased to write for publication, though not privately. In 1740 he retired from business, and he spent the remaining years of his life in his "Goose-Pie" house on Castle Hill, on friendly terms with the Edinburgh aristocracy. On January 7, 1758, he died, and was buried in Old Greyfriars churchyard, where there is a monument to his memory.

EDITIONS

The Works of Allan Ramsay. Edited by George Chalmers. 3 vols., 1848; 2 vols., 1877.

The Poetical Works of Allan Ramsay. Edited by C. Mackay. 2 vols., 1870.
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The Highland Laddie

THE Lawland lads think they are fine,
But O they're vain and idly gaudy!
How much unlike the gracefu' mien,
And manly looks of my Highland laddie?

CHORUS

O my bonny, bonny Highland laddie;
My handsome, charming Highland laddie:
May Heaven still guard, and love reward
Our Lawland lass and her Highland laddie.

If I were free at will to chuse
To be the wealthiest Lawland lady,
I'd take young Donald without trews,[1]
With bonnet blew, and belted plaidy.

The brawest[2] beau in borrows-town[3]
In a' his airs, with art made ready,
Compar'd to him, he's but a clown;
He's finer far in 's tartan plaidy.

[1] trousers. [2] finest. [3] a royal borough.

O'er benty[1] hill with him I'll run,
And leave my Lawland kin and dady;
Frae winter's cauld and summer's sun
He'll screen me with his Highland plaidy.

A painted room and silken bed,
May please a Lawland laird and lady;
But I can kiss, and be as glad
Behind a bush in 's Highland plaidy.

Few compliments between us pass,
I ca' him my dear Highland laddie;
And he ca's me his Lawland lass:
Syne rows[2] me in his Highland plaidy.

Nae greater joy I'll e'er pretend,
Than that his love prove true and steady,
Like mine to him; which ne'er shall end,
While Heaven preserve my Highland laddie.

(1721)

An Thou Were My Ain Thing

CHORUS

AN THOU were my ain thing,
I would love thee, I would love thee;
An thou were my ain thing,
How dearly would I love thee.

Like bees that suck the morning dew,
Frae flowers of sweetest scent and hue,
Sae wad I dwell upo' thy mou,[3]
And gar[4] the gods envy me.

Sae lang's I had the use of light,
I'd on thy beauties feast my sight,
Syne in saft whispers through the night
I'd tell how much I loo'd thee.

[1] covered with grass. [2] then rolls. [3] mouth. [4] make.

How fair and ruddy is my Jean!
She moves a goddess o'er the green:
Were I a king, thou should be queen,
 Nane but mysell aboon thee.

I'd grasp thee to this breast of mine,
Whilst thou, like ivy, on the vine,
Around my stronger limbs should twine,
 Form'd hardy to defend thee.

Time's on the wing, and will not stay,
In shining youth let's make our hay,
Since love admits of no delay,
 O! let na scorn undo thee.

While love does at his altar stand,
Hae here's my heart, gie me thy hand,
And with ilk smile thou shalt command
 The will of him wha loves thee.

CHORUS

An thou were my ain thing
I would love thee, I would love thee;
An thou were my ain thing,
 How dearly would I love thee.

(1724)

Through the Wood, Laddie

O SANDY, why leaves thou thy Nelly to mourn?
 Thy presence could ease me,
 When naething can please me:
Now dowie[1] I sigh on the bank of the burn,[2]
Or through the wood, laddie, until thou return.

Though woods now are bonny, and mornings are clear,
 While lavrocks[3] are singing,
 And primroses springing;
Yet nane of them pleases my eye or my ear,
When through the wood, laddie, ye dinna appear.

[1] lonely; melancholy. [2] brook. [3] larks

That I am forsaken, some spare not to tell;
I'm fash'd[1] wi' their scorning,
Baith ev'ning and morning:
Their jeering gaes aft to my heart wi' a knell,
When through the wood, laddie, I wander mysell.

Then stay, my dear Sandy, nae langer away,
But quick as an arrow,
Haste here to thy marrow,[2]
Wha's living in languor till that happy day,
When through the wood, laddie, we'll dance, sing, and play.

(1724)

Peggy

My Peggy is a young thing,
Just enter'd in her teens,
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay.
My Peggy is a young thing,
And I'm not very auld,
Yet well I like to meet her at
The wawking of the fauld.[3]

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
Whene'er we meet alane,
I wish nae mair, to lay my care,
I wish nae mair, of a' that's rare.
My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave[4] I'm cauld;
But she gars[5] a' my spirits glow
At wawking of the fauld.

My Peggy smiles sae kindly
Whene'er I whisper love,
That I look down on a' the town,
That I look down upon a crown.
My Peggy smiles sae kindly,

[1] troubled. [2] companion; mate. [3] watching of the sheep-fold.
[4] the rest. [5] makes.

It makes me blyth and bauld.
And naething gi'es me sic[1] delight,
As wawking of the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae saftly
When on my pipe I play;
By a' the rest, it is confest,
By a' the rest, that she sings best.
My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her sangs are tald,
With innocence the wale[2] of sense,
At wawking of the fauld.

(1725)

A Dainty Sang

Jocky said to Jenny, Jenny, wilt thou do't?
Ne'er a fit, quo' Jenny, for my tocher-good,[3]
For my tocher-good, I winna marry thee.
E'en's ye like, quo' Jocky, ye may let it be.

I hae gowd and gear, I hae land enough,
I hae seven good owsen[4] ganging in a pleugh,
Ganging in a pleugh, and linking[5] o'er the lee,
And gin ye winna tak me, I can let ye be.

I hae a good ha' house, a barn and a byre,
A stack afore the door, I'll make a rantin fire,
I'll make a rantin fire, and merry sall we be;
And gin ye winna tak me, I can let ye be.

Jenny said to Jocky, gin ye winna tell,
Ye shall be the lad, I'll be the lass mysell;
Ye're a bonny lad, and I'm a lassie free,
Ye're welcomer to tak me than to let me be.

(1725)

[1] such. [2] the best of sense. [3] property given as dower.
[4] oxen. [5] going.

William Hamilton of Bangour

1704–1754

WILLIAM HAMILTON, the son of James Hamilton of Bangour, advocate, was born at Bangour, Linlithgowshire, Scotland. He made his first public appearance as a poet when he contributed some lyrics to Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany,* in 1724–7. He espoused the cause of the Jacobites in "Gladsmuir," in which he celebrated the victory of the Stuarts at Prestonpans; but when Culloden marked their defeat, his "Soliloquy Wrote in June, 1746," told a different story. With other rebels he succeeded in reaching France, but he was soon allowed to return to Scotland. His ill health, however, forced him to go back to France. In 1749 a surreptitious edition of "Poems on Several Occasions" was reissued as "Hamilton of Bangour's Poems." No genuine edition of his poems came out until after his death, when "Poems on Several Occasions by William Hamilton of Bangour" appeared. He died at Lyons, March 25, 1754, and was buried in the Abbey Church, Holyrood.

EDITION

Poems and Songs of William Hamilton of Bangour. Edited, with a Life, by James Paterson. 1850.

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The Braes[1] *of Yarrow*

A. BUSK[2] ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow!
Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride,
And think nae mair on the braes of Yarrow.

[1] banks. [2] dress or deck.

B. Where got ye that bonny bonny bride?
Where got ye that winsome marrow?
A. I got her where I durst not weel be seen—
Pu'ing the birks[1] on the braes of Yarrow.

Weep not, weep not, my bonny bonny bride,
Weep not, weep not, my winsome marrow,
Nor let thy heart lament to leave
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow.

B. Why does she weep, thy bonny bonny bride?
Why does she weep, thy winsome marrow?
And why dare ye nae mair weel be seen
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow?

A. Lang maun she weep, lang maun she, maun she weep,
Lang maun she weep with dule[2] and sorrow,
And lang maun I nae mair weel be seen
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow:

For she has tint[3] her lover, lover dear—
Her lover dear, the cause of sorrow;
And I hae slain the comeliest swain
That e'er pu'd birks on the braes of Yarrow.

Why runs thy stream, O Yarrow, Yarrow, red?
Why on thy braes heard the voice of sorrow?
And why yon melancholious weeds
Hung on the bonny birks of Yarrow?

What's yonder floats on the rueful, rueful flood?
What's yonder floats? O dule and sorrow!
'T is he, the comely swain I slew
Upon the duleful braes of Yarrow.

Wash, O wash his wounds, his wounds in tears,
His wounds in tears, with dule and sorrow,
And wrap his limbs in mourning weeds,
And lay him on the braes of Yarrow.

[1] pulling the birches. [2] grief. [3] lost.

Then build, then build, ye sisters, sisters sad,
Ye sisters sad, his tomb with sorrow,
And weep around in woeful wise,
His hapless fate on the braes of Yarrow.

Curse ye, curse ye his useless, useless shield,
My arm that wrought the deed of sorrow,
The fatal spear that pierc'd his breast,
His comely breast, on the braes of Yarrow.

Did I not warn thee, not to, not to luve?
And warn from fight? but to my sorrow,
Too rashly bauld, a stronger arm
Thou mett'st, and fell on the braes of Yarrow.

C. Sweet smells the birk, green grows, green grows the grass.
Yellow on Yarrow's bank the gowan,[1]
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
Sweet the wave of Yarrow flowan.

A. Flows Yarrow sweet? as sweet, as sweet flows Tweed,
As green its grass, its gowan yellow,
As sweet smells on its braes the birk,
The apple frae its rock as mellow.

Fair was thy luve, fair, fair indeed thy luve,
In flow'ry bands thou him did'st fetter;
Though he was fair and weel beluv'd again,
Than me he never luv'd thee better.

Busk ye, then busk, my bonny bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow,
Busk ye, and luve me on the banks of Tweed,
And think nae mair on the braes of Yarrow.

C. How can I busk a bonny bonny bride?
How can I busk a winsome marrow?
How luve him upon the banks of Tweed,
That slew my luve on the braes of Yarrow?

[1] daisy.

O Yarrow fields, may never, never rain
 Nor dew thy tender blossoms cover,
For there was basely slain my luve,
 My luve, as he had not been a lover.

The boy put on his robes, his robes of green,
 His purple vest, 'twas my awn sewing:
Ah! wretched me! I little, little kenn'd
 He was in these to meet his ruin.

The boy took out his milk-white, milk-white steed,
 Unheedful of my dule and sorrow:
But ere the to-fall[1] of the night
 He lay a corps on the braes of Yarrow.

Much I rejoic'd that waeful, waeful day;
 I sang, my voice the woods returning:
But lang ere night the spear was flown
 That slew my luve, and left me mourning.

What can my barbarous, barbarous father do,
 But with his cruel rage pursue me?
My luver's blood is on thy spear,
 How canst thou, barbarous man, then wooe me?

My happy sisters may be, may be proud,
 With cruel, and ungentle scoffin',
May bid me seek on Yarrow's braes
 My luver nailed in his coffin.

My brother Douglas may upbraid, upbraid,
 And strive with threat'ning words to muve me:
My luver's blood is on thy spear,
 How canst thou ever bid me luve thee?

Yes, yes, prepare the bed, the bed of luve,
 With bridal sheets my body cover,
Unbar, ye bridal maids, the door,
 Let in the expected husband lover.

[1] close.

But who the expected husband, husband is?
His hands, methinks, are bath'd in slaughter:
Ah me! what ghastly spectre's yon
Comes, in his pale shroud, bleeding after?

Pale as he is, here lay him, lay him down,
O lay his cold head on my pillow;
Take aff, take aff, these bridal weeds,
And crown my careful head with willow.

Pale though thou art, yet best, yet best beluv'd,
O could my warmth to life restore thee!
Yet lie all night between my breasts;
No youth lay ever there before thee.

Pale, pale indeed, O lovely, lovely youth!
Forgive, forgive so foul a slaughter,
And lie all night between my breasts;
No youth shall ever lie there after.

A. Return, return, O mournful, mournful bride,
Return, and dry thy useless sorrow,
Thy luver heeds nought of thy sighs,
He lies a corps on the braes of Yarrow.

(1724)

Edward Young

1683–1765

EDWARD YOUNG, whose father was rector of Upham and fellow of Winchester, and later dean of Salisbury and chaplain to William and Mary, was born at Upham and baptized on July 3, 1683. In 1695 he was admitted to Winchester School. In 1702 he matriculated as commoner at New College, Oxford, and later as a gentleman commoner at Corpus Christi. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All Souls'; in 1714 he took his B.C.L., and in 1719 his D.C.L. He became friends with Tickell and was admitted to Addison's "little senate." His first publication was an "Epistle to Lord Lansdowne" in 1713, followed in the same year by "A Poem on the Last Day." Two plays, "Busiris" and "The Revenge," had runs of nine and six nights respectively at Drury Lane, and the former won the distinction of being ridiculed in Fielding's "Tom Thumb." In 1725 he began a series of satires called "The Universal Passion," which was completed in six parts in 1728. In this year he was appointed chaplain to the King, thus matching his father's preferment under William and Mary. In 1730 he was appointed to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. He married Lady Elizabeth Lee, the daughter of the Earl of Lichfield. In 1742, and until 1745, appeared "The Complaint: or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality," which, with the trend of poetic expression at that time, was immediately popular. He died on April 5, 1765.

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Love of Fame

Satire V: On Women

The languid lady next appears in state,
Who was not born to carry her own weight;
She lolls, reels, staggers, till some foreign aid
To her own stature lifts the feeble maid.
Then, if ordain'd to so severe a doom,
She, by just stages, journeys round the room:
But, knowing her own weakness, she despairs
To scale the Alps—that is, ascend the stairs.
My fan! let others say, who laugh at toil;
Fan! hood! glove! scarf! is her laconic style;
And that is spoke with such a dying fall,
That Betty rather sees, than hears the call:
The motion of her lips, and meaning eye,
Piece out th' idea her faint words deny.
O listen with attention most profound!
Her voice is but the shadow of a sound.
And help! oh help! her spirits are so dead,
One hand scarce lifts the other to her head.
If, there, a stubborn pin it triumphs o'er,
She pants! she sinks away! and is no more.
Let the robust, and the gigantic carve;
Life is not worth so much, she'd rather starve;
But chew she must herself; ah cruel fate!
That Rosalinda can't by proxy eat.
An antidote in female caprice lies
(Kind heav'n!) against the poison of their eyes.
Thalestris triumphs in a manly mien;
Loud is her accent, and her phrase obscene.
In fair and open dealing where's the shame?
What nature dares to give, she dares to name.
This honest fellow is sincere and plain,
And justly gives the jealous husband pain.

(Vain is the task to petticoats assign'd,
If wanton language shows a naked mind.)
And now and then, to grace her eloquence,
An oath supplies the vacancies of sense.
Hark! the shrill notes transpierce the yielding air,
And teach the neighb'ring echoes how to swear.
By Jove, is faint, and for the simple swain;
She, on the Christian system, is profane.
But though the volley rattles in your ear,
Believe her dress, she's not a grenadier.
If thunder's awful, how much more our dread,
When Jove deputes a lady in his stead!
A lady! pardon my mistaken pen,
A shameless woman is the worst of men.
 Few to good-breeding make a just pretence;
Good-breeding is the blossom of good-sense;
The last result of an accomplish'd mind,
With outward grace, the body's virtue, join'd.
A violated decency now reigns;
And nymphs for failings take peculiar pains.
With Chinese painters modern toasts agree,
The point they aim at, is deformity:
They throw their persons with a hoyden air
Across the room, and toss into the chair.
So far their commerce with mankind is gone;
They, for our manners, have exchang'd their own.
The modest look, the castigated grace,
The gentle movement, and slow-measur'd pace,
For which her lovers dy'd, her parents pray'd,
Are indecorums with the modern maid.
Stiff forms are bad; but let not worse intrude,
Nor conquer art and nature to be rude.
Modern good-breeding carry to its height,
And lady D——'s self will be polite.

(1725)

Night Thoughts

I

Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsully'd with a tear.
 From short (as usual) and disturb'd repose,
I wake: how happy they, who wake no more!
Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd, desponding thought,
From wave to wave of fancy'd misery,
At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
Though now restor'd, 't is only change of pain,
(A bitter change!) severer for severe.
The day too short for my distress! and Night,
Ev'n in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine, to the colour of my fate.
 Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world.
Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
Nor eye, nor list'ning ear, an object finds;
Creation sleeps. 'T is as the gen'ral pulse
Of life stood still, and nature made a pause;
An awful pause! prophetic of her end.
And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd;
Fate! drop the curtain; I can lose no more.
 Silence and Darkness! solemn sisters! twins
From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought
To reason, and on reason build resolve,
(That column of true majesty in man)
Assist me: I will thank you in the grave;
The grave, your kingdom: there this frame shall fall
A victim sacred to your dreary shrine.
But what are ye?—Thou, who didst put to flight
Primeval silence, when the Morning-Stars,
Exulting, shouted o'er the rising ball;

O Thou, whose word from solid darkness struck
That spark, the sun, strike wisdom from my soul;
My soul, which flies to Thee, her trust, her treasure,
As misers to their gold, while others rest.
Through this opaque of nature, and of soul,
This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
To lighten, and to cheer. O lead my mind,
(A mind that fain would wander from its woe)
Lead it through various scenes of life and death;
And from each scene, the noblest truths inspire.
Nor less inspire my conduct, than my song;
Teach my best reason, reason; my best will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear:
Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.
The bell strikes one. We take no note of time,
But from its loss. To give it then a tongue,
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours:
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the signal that demands dispatch:
How much is to be done? My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—On what? a fathomless abyss;
A dread eternity! how surely mine!
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?
How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man?
How passing wonder He, who made him such?
Who cent'red in our make such strange extremes?
From diff'rent natures marvellously mixt,
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguisht link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the deity!
A beam ethereal, sully'd, and absorpt!
Though sully'd and dishonour'd, still divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!

Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a god!—I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost! at home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd, aghast,
And wond'ring at her own: how reason reels!
O what a miracle to man is man,
Triumphantly distress'd! what joy, what dread!
Alternately transported, and alarm'd!
What can preserve my life? or what destroy?
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;
Legions of angels can't confine me there.
'T is past conjecture; all things rise in proof:
While o'er my limbs sleep's soft dominion spread:
What though my soul fantastic measures trod
O'er fairy fields; or mourn'd along the gloom
Of pathless woods; or down the craggy steep
Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool;
Or scal'd the cliff; or danc'd on hollow winds,
With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain?
Her ceaseless flight, though devious, speaks her nature
Of subtler essence than the trodden clod;
Active, aërial, tow'ring, unconfin'd,
Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.
Ev'n silent night proclaims my soul immortal:
Ev'n silent night proclaims eternal day.
For human weal, heav'n husbands all events;
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.
Why then their loss deplore, that are not lost?
Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,
In infidel distress? Are angels there?
Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, ethereal fire?
They live! they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceiv'd; and from an eye
Of tenderness let heav'nly pity fall
On me, more justly number'd with the dead.
This is the desert, this the solitude:
How populous! how vital, is the grave!
This is creation's melancholy vault,
The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom;
The land of apparitions, empty shades!
All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond

Is substance; the reverse is folly's creed:
How solid all, where change shall be no more!

Night-visions may befriend, (as sung above):
Our waking dreams are fatal. How I dreamt
Of things impossible? (Could sleep do more?)
Of joys perpetual in perpetual change?
Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave?
Eternal sunshine in the storms of life?
How richly were my noon-tide trances hung
With gorgeous tapestries of pictur'd joys?
Joy behind joy, in endless perspective!
Till at Death's toll, whose restless iron tongue
Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
Starting I woke, and found myself undone.
Where now my frenzy's pompous furniture?
The cobweb'd cottage, with its ragged wall
Of mould'ring mud, is royalty to me!
The spider's most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
On earthly bliss; it breaks at every breeze.
O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full, above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light.
Safe are you lodg'd above these rolling spheres;
The baleful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions ev'ry hour;
And rarely for the better; or the best,
More mortal than the common births of Fate.
Each Moment has its sickle, emulous
Of Time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the root; each Moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.
Bliss! sublunary bliss!—proud words, and vain!
Implicit treason to divine decree!

A bold invasion of the rights of Heav'n!
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace!
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart!
Death! great proprietor of all! 't is thine
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.
The sun himself by thy permission shines;
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean?
Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me?
Insatiate archer! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.
O Cynthia! why so pale? dost thou lament
Thy wretched neighbour? Grieve to see thy wheel
Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human life?
How wanes my borrow'd bliss! from Fortune's smile
Precarious courtesy! not virtue's sure,
Self-given, solar, ray of sound delight. . . .

(1742)

John Dyer

1700 (?)–1758

JOHN DYER, the son of a solicitor, was born at Aberglasney, Carmarthenshire, Wales, about 1700. He was educated in Westminster School, and then placed in his father's office. On his father's death, he gave up business and traveled as an itinerant artist through South Wales and the neighboring English counties. In 1727 he published "Grongar Hill," which gave him a reputation. He went to Italy to pursue his art studies, but made little progress. On his return in 1740, he published "Ruins of Rome," the sole gain from the journey. He was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln, and in 1741 he was made vicar of Calthorp in Leicestershire and succeeded to other livings in the same county. In 1752 he had the degree of LL.B. conferred upon him by Cambridge as the result of a royal mandate. His poem, "The Fleece," was brought out in 1757. The next year he died of a consumptive disorder. Wordsworth wrote a rather fine sonnet to his memory.

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Grongar Hill[1]

SILENT nymph! with curious eye,
Who, the purple ev'ning, lie
On the mountain's lonely van,
Beyond the noise of busy man,
Painting fair the form of things,

[1] a hill in South Wales.

While the yellow linnet sings,
Or the tuneful nightingale
Charms the forest with her tale;
Come, with all thy various hues,
Come, and aid thy sister Muse;
Now while Phoebus, riding high,
Gives lustre to the land and sky,
Grongar Hill invites my song;
Draw the landskip bright and strong;
Grongar, in whose mossy cells,
Sweetly musing Quiet dwells;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest Muses made,
So oft I have, the ev'ning still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
With my hand beneath my head,
While stray'd my eyes o'er Towy's flood,[1]
Over mead and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
Till Contemplation had her fill.
About his chequer'd sides I wind,
And leave his brooks and meads behind,
And groves and grottoes where I lay,
And vistoes[2] shooting beams of day.
Wide and wider spreads the vale,
As circles on a smooth canal:
The mountains round, unhappy fate!
Sooner or later, of all height,
Withdraw their summits from the skies,
And lessen as the others rise:
Still the prospect wider spreads,
Adds a thousand woods and meads;
Still it widens, widens still,
And sinks the newly-risen hill.
Now I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landskip lies below!
No clouds, no vapours intervene;
But the gay, the open scene
Does the face of Nature show

[1] the River Towe that flows into Bristol Channel. [2] vistas.

In all the hues of heaven's bow,
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.
 Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly tow'ring in the skies;
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires;
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads,
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks.
 Below me trees unnumber'd rise,
Beautiful in various dyes;
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable yew,
The slender fir, that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs,
And beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phillis, queen of love!
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wand'ring eye:
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an awful look below;
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps;
So both a safety from the wind
On mutual dependence find.
 'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds,
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
Conceal'd in ruins, moss, and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary moulder'd walls.
Yet Time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile complete,

Big with the vanity of state:
But transient is the smile of Fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sunbeam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.
And see the rivers how they run
Thro' woods and meads, in shade and sun!
Sometimes swift and sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave, they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life to endless sleep:
Thus is Nature's vesture wrought,
To instruct our wand'ring thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.
Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landskip tire the view!
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky!
The pleasant seat, the ruin'd tow'r,
The naked rock, the shady bow'r;
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.
See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide,
Where the ev'ning gilds the tide,
How close and small the hedges lie!
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!
A step, methinks, may pass the stream,
So little distant dangers seem;
So we mistake the Future's face,
Ey'd thro' Hope's deluding glass;
As yon summits soft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which, to those who journey near,
Barren, brown, and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way;

The present's still a cloudy day.
O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see;
Content me with an humble shade,
My passions tam'd, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul;
'Tis thus the busy beat the air,
And misers gather wealth and care.
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,
As on the mountain-turf I lie;
While the wanton Zephyr sings,
And in the vale perfumes his wings;
While the waters murmur deep;
While the shepherd charms his sheep;
While the birds unbounded fly,
And with music fill the sky,
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high.
Be full, ye courts! be great who will;
Search for Peace with all your skill:
Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor:
In vain ye search, she is not there;
In vain ye search the domes of Care!
Grass and flowers Quiet treads,
On the meads and mountain-heads,
Along with Pleasure close ally'd,
Ever by each other's side,
And often, by the murm'ring rill,
Hears the thrush, while all is still,
Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

(1726)

Anonymous

The Happy Savage[1]

Oh, HAPPY he who never saw the face
Of man, nor heard the sound of human voice!
But soon as born was carried and expos'd
In some vast desert, suckled by the wolf,
Or shaggy bear more kind than our fell race;
Who with his fellow-brutes can range around
The echoing forest: his rude artless mind
Uncultivated as the soil—he joins
The dreadful harmony of howling wolves,
And the fierce lion's roar; while far away
Th' affrighted traveller retires and trembles.
Happy the lonely savage! nor deceiv'd,
Nor vex'd, nor griev'd—in ev'ry darksome cave,
Under each verdant shade, he takes repose.
Sweet are his slumbers—of all human arts
Happily ignorant, nor taught by wisdom,
Numberless woes; nor polish'd into torment.

(1732)

[1] Published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1732.

James Thomson

1700–1748

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister in Ednam, Roxburghshire, Scotland, was born on September 7, 1700. Two months later his father accepted the call to Southdean, a more important charge in the same county. James entered Edinburgh University late in 1715. On February 9, 1716, his father died in an apoplectic fit which seized him while he was exorcising what was known in the parish as "the Woolie Ghost." The father's death and its circumstances had a terrifying effect upon the youth; he was years in overcoming it, and it later found expression in his poetry. Thomson remained in residence at the University for eight or nine years, taking his B.A. but not his M.A. degree. He became a student of divinity, but when he was severely criticized for a certain floridity of style in a lecture on Psalm cxix, he lost his desire to enter the church. In 1725 he went to London. Several of his poetical pieces had appeared in the *Edinburgh Miscellany*, one being "On a Country Life," which is suggestive of his later "Winter." The latter poem came out in 1726, bringing him praise from the critics and enlarging the circle of his friends and patrons. Other "Seasons" followed: "Summer" (1727), "Spring" (1728), and "Autumn" (1730), which first appeared in the collected "Seasons" along with the "Hymn." The entire work brought in £1000. The same year his play "Sophonisba" was acted at Drury Lane, and it well deserved the ridicule Fielding poured upon it in his "Tom Thumb."

Thomson now became tutor to Charles R. Talbot, the son of the future Lord Chancellor, and traveled abroad for nearly two years. In 1733 his pupil died, but two months later the Lord Chancellor Talbot gave Thomson a sinecure as secretary of briefs in the Court of Chancery, which he held until the death of his patron in 1737. The first part of his epic poem, "Liberty," came out in 1734 with a tribute in the opening lines to Charles Talbot; the next two parts appeared in 1735, and the last two in 1736. In 1738 he was given a pension of £100 by the Prince of Wales. In the same year his "Agamemnon" was acted at Drury Lane. The next year "Edward and Eleanora" was forbidden the boards, and then was printed and effectually damned. In 1740 he wrote "Rule Britannia," a lyric known to more patriots than are aware of its authorship. By 1744 he had finished his revision of "The Seasons": "Spring" was enlarged

from 1087 to 1173 lines, "Summer" from 1206 to 1796 lines, "Autumn" from 1296 to 1375 lines, and "Winter" from 787 to 1069 lines. In 1744 he was given another sinecure as Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands at £300 a year. His best play, "Tancred and Sigismunda," was acted in 1745 at Drury Lane with Garrick as Tancred. In the following year his last revised edition of "The Seasons" was published. In 1748 his pension ceased because the Prince of Wales quarreled with Lord Lyttelton, Thomson's friend and patron. The same year, "The Castle of Indolence" was published, after much time spent in the making. Thomson died on August 27, 1748, from a neglected cold. A posthumous tragedy was acted at Covent Garden on January 13, 1749, with the prologue by Lord Lyttelton. In 1762 a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

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Winter

SEE, Winter comes, to rule the vary'd year,
Sullen, and sad, with all his rising train;
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Cogenial[1] horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nurs'd by careless solitude I liv'd
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleas'd have I wander'd through your rough domain;
Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd,
In the grim evening-sky. Thus pass'd the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out and smil'd.
To thee, the patron of her first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington![2] renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:[3]
Skim'd the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions borne,
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale;
And now among the wintry clouds again,
Roll'd in the doubling storm, she tries to soar;
To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy! could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description and with manly thought.
Nor art thou skill'd in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive:
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm unshaken uncorrupted soul
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal,
A steady spirit regularly free;

[1] congenial. [2] Spencer Compton, Earl Wilmington (c.1673–1743).
[3] Since 1726. The "Seasons" were completed in the interval from 1726 to 1730.

These, each exalting each, the statesman light
Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call.
 Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,[1]
And fierce Aquarius stains th' inverted[2] year;
Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the sun
Scarce spreads o'er ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as, cloth'd in cloudy storm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky;
And, soon descending, to the long dark night,
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
Nor is the night unwish'd; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep-ting'd, and damp, and congregated clouds,
And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease.
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrow'd land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discolour'd flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractur'd mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.
 Then comes the Father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure
Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul;

[1] The sun quits the zodiacal sign of the Archer and enters that of Capricorn on December 21, and a month later enters that of Aquarius.
[2] The year turned in the opposite direction.

Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. Th' unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from th' untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive, and dripping; while the cottage-hind
Hangs o'er th' enlivening blaze, and taleful there
Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the storm that blows
Without, and rattles on his humble roof.
 Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,
At last the rous'd-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till, again constrain'd,
Between two meeting hills it bursts a way,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.
 Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul!
That sees astonish'd! and astonish'd sings!
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow,
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings! say,
Where your aërial magazines reserv'd,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?

In what far-distant region of the sky,
Hush'd in deep silence, sleep you when 'tis calm?
When from the pallid sky the sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb
Uncertain wanders, stain'd; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
Which master to obey: while rising slow,
Blank, in the leaden-colour'd east, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shivering ray;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
Snatch'd in short eddies, plays the wither'd leaf;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broaden'd nostrils to the sky upturn'd,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
Even as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plumy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They pick'd their scanty fare, a blackening train
Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary flight,
And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild wing
The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal press'd, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves; while from the shore,
Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountain, comes a voice,
That solemn-sounding bids the world prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden burst,
And hurls the whole precipitated air,
Down, in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends th' ethereal force, and with strong gust

Turns from its bottom the discolour'd deep.
Through the black night that sits immense around,
Lash'd into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn;
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swell'd, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,
And anchor'd navies from their stations drive,
Wild as the winds across the howling waste
Of mighty waters: now th' inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their heads.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full-exerted heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts; if some sharp rock,
Or shoal insidious break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating round.
Nor less at land the loosen'd tempest reigns.
The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone to the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark way-faring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vex'd, and sheds
What of its tarnish'd honours yet remain;
Dash'd down, and scatter'd, by the tearing wind's
Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove
The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
And, on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
Sleep frighted flies; and round the rocking dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burthen'd air
Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant sighs,
That, utter'd by the demon of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.
Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds, commix'd
With stars swift-gliding sweep along the sky.
All nature reels. Till Nature's King, who oft

Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm;
Then straight air, sea, and earth are hush'd at once.
As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
Slow-meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,
Let me associate with the serious night,
And contemplation her sedate compeer;
Let me shake off th' intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.
Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.
Sad, sickening thought! and yet deluded man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions past,
And broken slumbers, rises still resolv'd,
With new-flush'd hopes, to run the giddy round.
Father of light and life! thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure,
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!
The keener tempests come: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm.
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin-wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day,
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe, of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts,
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening-ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid, and chill,

Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tam'd by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,
In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is:
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urg'd on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispers'd,
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.
 Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the storm,
And watch them strict: for from the bellowing east,
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burthen of whole wintry plains
In one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urg'd,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipt with a wreath, high-curling in the sky.
 As thus the snows arise; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darken'd air;
In his own loose-revolving fields the swain
Disaster'd stands; sees other hills ascend,

Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain:
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray:
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of home
Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!
What black despair, what horror fills his heart!
When for the dusky spot, which fancy feign'd
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track, and blest abode of man:
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent! beyond the power of frost,
Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smooth'd up with snow; and, what is land unknown,
What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh fountain from the bottom boils.
These check his fearful steps; and down he sinks
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,
Mix'd with the tender anguish Nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him th' officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffen'd corse,

Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast.
Ah little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence, surround;
They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
Ah little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel this very moment, death
And all the sad variety of pain!
How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon-glooms;
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic Muse;
Even in the vale, where wisdom loves to dwell,
With friendship, peace, and contemplation join'd,
How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
In deep retir'd distress. How many stand
Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought fond man
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,
And heedless rambling impulse learn to think;
The conscious heart of charity would warm,
And her wide wish benevolence dilate;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.
And here can I forget the generous band,[1]

[1] The Jail Committee of 1729, appointed to enquire into the condition of the prisons.—*Robertson.*

Who, touch'd with human woe, redressive search'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail?
Unpity'd, and unheard, where misery moans;
Where sickness pines; where thirst and hunger burn,
And poor misfortune feels the lash of vice.
While in the land of liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants rag'd:
Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving mouth;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed,
Even robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes;
And crush'd out lives by secret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toil'd or bled.
O great design! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-temper'd zeal.
Ye sons of mercy! yet resume the search;
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands Oppression's iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouch'd remains; in this rank age,
Much is the patriot's weeding hand requir'd.
The toils of law, (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade)
How glorious were the day! that saw these broke,
And every man within the reach of right.
 By wintry famine rous'd, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the shining Alps,
And wavy Apennines, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood! bony, and gaunt, and grim!
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy snow.
All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend,

Or shake the murdering savages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her breast.
The godlike face of man avails him nought.
Even beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
But if, appriz'd of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lur'd by the scent,
On church-yards drear (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul shades, and frighted ghosts, they howl.
 Among those hilly regions, where embrac'd
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons[1] dwell;
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.
From steep to steep, loud-thundering, down they come,
A wintry waste in dire commotion all;
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelm'd.
 Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning forest and the shore,
Beat by a boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, scene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join,
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty dead;
Sages of ancient time, as gods rever'd,
As gods beneficent, who blest mankind
With arts, and arms, and humaniz'd a world.
Rous'd at th' inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-liv'd volume; and, deep-musing, hail
The sacred shades, that slowly-rising pass

[1] The most easterly of the cantons of Switzerland, so called because the inhabitants wore a dress of *gray* homespun.

Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,[1]
Who firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible! calm reason's holy law,
That voice of God within th' attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death:
Great moral teacher! wisest of mankind!
Solon[2] the next, who built his common-weal
On equity's wide base; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamp'd
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts,
And of bold freedom, they unequal'd shone,
The pride of smiling Greece, and human-kind.
Lycurgus[3] then, who bow'd beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see,
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell
The firm devoted chief,[4] who prov'd by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then Aristides[5] lifts his honest front;
Spotless of heart, to whom th' unflattering voice
Of freedom gave the noblest name of Just;
In pure majestic poverty rever'd;
Who, even his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swell'd a haughty rival's fame.
Rear'd by his care, of softer ray, appears
Cimon[6] sweet-soul'd; whose genius, rising strong,
Shook off the load of young debauch; abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend
Of every worth and every splendid art;
Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
Late-call'd to glory, in unequal times,
Pensive, appear. The fair Corinthian boast,

[1] Socrates (469–399 B.C.).
[2] Solon (c.638–558 B.C.).
[3] Lycurgus (not later than 825 B.C.), the great legislator of Sparta.
[4] Leonidas, king of Sparta (d.480 B.C.).
[5] Aristides (d.c.468 B.C.), an Athenian statesman and general. His "haughty rival" was Themistocles.
[6] Cimon (d.449 B.C.), a great Athenian soldier and statesman.

Timoleon,[1] temper'd happy, mild, and firm,
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.
And, equal to the best, the Theban pair,[2]
Whose virtues, in heroic concord join'd,
Their country rais'd to freedom, empire, fame.
He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,
And left a mass of sordid lees behind,
Phocion the Good;[3] in public life severe,
To virtue still inexorably firm;
But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,
Sweet peace and happy wisdom smooth'd his brow,
Not friendship softer was, nor love more kind.
And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To save a rotten state, Agis,[4] who saw
Even Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk.
The two Achæan heroes[5] close the train.
Aratus, who a while relum'd the soul
Of fondly-lingering liberty in Greece;
And he, her darling as her latest hope,
The gallant Philopœmen; who to arms
Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure;
Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain;
Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.
Of rougher front, a mighty people come!
A race of heroes! in those virtuous times
Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame
Their dearest country they too fondly lov'd.
Her better founder first, the light of Rome,
Numa,[6] who soften'd her rapacious sons.
Servius[7] the king, who laid the solid base

[1] Timoleon (d.377 B.C.) slew his brother Timophanes rather than allow him to become a tyrant of his native city, Corinth (344 B.C.).

[2] Epaminondas (d.362 B.C.), the hero of two great victories over the Spartans, and Pelopidas, his friend (d.364 B.C.), who raised Thebes over Sparta and Athens to the supremacy of Greece.—*Robertson.*

[3] Phocion (c.402–317 B.C.), the leader of the peace party against Demosthenes, who counselled war on Philip of Macedon.

[4] Agis, King of Sparta (244–240 B.C.).

[5] Aratus (d.213 B.C.) and Philopœmon (d.183 B.C.), in succession chiefs of the Achæan League.

[6] Numa Pompilius, the second mythical King of Rome after Romulus, the founder.

[7] Servius Tullius, the sixth King of Rome.

On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
Then the great consuls venerable rise.
The public father who the private quell'd,[1]
As on the dread tribunal sternly sad.
He, whom his thankless country could not lose,
Camillus,[2] only vengeful to her foes.
Fabricius,[3] scorner of all-conquering gold:
And Cincinnatus,[4] awful from the plough.
Thy willing victim,[5] Carthage, bursting loose
From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith
Imperious call'd, and honour's dire command.
Scipio,[6] the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade
With friendship and philosophy retir'd.
Tully,[7] whose powerful eloquence a while
Restrain'd the rapid fate of rushing Rome.
Unconquer'd Cato,[8] virtuous in extreme.
And thou, unhappy Brutus,[9] kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urg'd,
Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend.
Thousands, besides, the tribute of a verse

[1] Lucius Junius Brutus, to avenge the rape of his daughter Lucretia by Tarquin, headed a revolt against the Tarquins and drove them from Rome. When his two sons joined in an attempt to restore the Tarquins, he ordered them to be put to death.

[2] Camillus (d.365 B.C.), the saviour of the Roman state against the Gauls in 390.

[3] Fabricius, a Roman consul, resisted the bribes of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, who was invading Rome and with whom Fabricius was sent to treat (280 B.C.).

[4] Cincinnatus, called from the plow to save Rome in 458 and 439 B.C.

[5] Regulus, after a terrible defeat by the Carthaginians in 255 B.C., was held prisoner for five years. Then he was sent on an embassy to Rome to secure peace, but he advised the senate to continue war on Carthage. The senate took his advice, but the whole city implored him to remain in Rome. This he refused to do, and on his return to Carthage he was put to death with horrible cruelties.

[6] Scipio Africanus Minor reduced Africa in 146 B.C. to a Roman province. He was a scholar and a gentleman.

[7] Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.).

[8] Cato Uticensis (95–46 B.C.) committed suicide rather than deliver Utica in Africa over to Julius Cæsar.

[9] Marcus Junius Brutus joined in the conspiracy to murder his friend, Julius Cæsar, in 44 B.C., and killed himself at the battle of Philippi, 42 B.C.

Demand; but who can count the stars of heaven?
Who sing their influence on this lower world?
Behold, who yonder comes! in sober state,
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan swain![1]
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song! and equal by his side,
The British Muse;[2] join'd hand in hand they walk,
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame.
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
Pathetic drew th' impassion'd heart, and charm'd
Transported Athens with the moral scene:
Nor those who, tuneful, wak'd th' enchanting lyre.
First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserv'd,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lonely power! the door be thine;
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refin'd,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudy'd wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart:
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,[3]
Yet is his life the more endearing song.
Where art thou, Hammond?[4] thou the darling pride,
The friend and lover of the tuneful throng!
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
Each active worth each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou ravish'd from our hope so soon?
What now avails that noble thirst of fame,
Which stung thy fervent breast? that treasur'd store
Of knowledge, early gain'd? that eager zeal
To serve thy country, glowing in the band

[1] Vergil. [2] Milton.
[3] His translation of the 'Iliad," published 1715–20, and of the "Odyssey," published 1723–5.
[4] James Hammond (1710–1742), a minor poet and a friend of poets. He was M.P. for Truro in 1741.

Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name?
What now, alas! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit? that rapture for the muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade with softest light thy virtue smile?
Ah! only show'd to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain!
 Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspir'd:
With them would search, if nature's boundless frame
Was call'd, late-rising from the void of night,
Or sprung eternal from th' eternal Mind,
Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.
Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
Would, gradual, open on our opening minds;
And each diffusive harmony unite,
In full perfection, to th' astonish'd eye.
Then would we try to scan the moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted and impell'd,
By wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good. The sage historic Muse
Should next conduct us through the deeps of time:
Show us how empire grew, declin'd, and fell,
In scatter'd states; what makes the nations smile,
Improves their soil, and gives them double suns;[1]
And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talk'd,
Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
That portion of divinity, that ray
Of purest Heaven, which lights the public soul
Of patriots, and of heroes. But if doom'd,
In powerless humble fortune, to repress
These ardent risings of the kindling soul;
Then, even superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Through shades and plains, along the smoothest stream
Of rural life; or, snatch'd away by hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,

[1] double crops.

With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness, and wonder; where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent
Rises from state to state, and world to world.
But when with these the serious thought is foil'd,
We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
Of frolic fancy; and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
Whence lively wit excites to gay surprise;
Or folly-painting humour, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve.
 Meantime the village rouses up the fire;
While well attested, and as well believ'd,
Heard solemn, goes the goblin-story round;
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round:
The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart,
Easily pleas'd; the long loud laugh, sincere;
The kiss, snatch'd hasty from the sidelong maid,
On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep;
The leap, the slap, the haul; and, shook to notes
Of native music, the respondent dance.
Thus jocund fleets with them the winter night.
 The city swarms intense. The public haunt,
Full of each theme, and warm with mixed discourse,
Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow
Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,
To swift destruction. On the rankled soul
The gaming fury falls; and in one gulf
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.
Up-springs the dance along the lighted dome,
Mix'd, and evolv'd, a thousand sprightly ways.
The glittering court effuses every pomp;
The circle deepens: beam'd from gaudy robes,
Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves:
While, a gay insect in his summer shine,
The fop, light-fluttering, spreads his mealy wings.

Dread o'er the scene the ghost of Hamlet stalks;
Othello rages: poor Monimia[1] mourns:
And Belvidera[2] pours her soul in love.
Terror alarms the breast; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek: or else the Comic Muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself,
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes
Of beauteous life; whate'er can deck mankind,
Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil[3] show'd.
O thou, whose wisdom, solid yet refin'd,
Whose patriot-virtues, and consummate skill
To touch the finer springs that move the world,
Join'd to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
And all Apollo's animating fire,
Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
At once the guardian, ornament, and joy,
Of polish'd life; permit the Rural Muse,
O Chesterfield,[4] to grace with thee her song!
Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
(For every muse has in thy train a place)
To mark thy various full-accomplish'd mind:
To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
Rejects th' allurements of corrupted power;
That elegant politeness, which excels
Even in the judgment of presumptuous France,
The boasted manners of her shining court;
That wit, the vivid energy of sense,
The truth of nature, which with Attic point,
And kind well-temper'd satire, smoothly keen,
Steals through the soul, and without pain corrects.
Or, rising thence with yet a brighter flame,
O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
Then drest by thee, more amiably fair,

[1] the heroine of Thomas Otway's "The Orphan" (1680).
[2] the heroine of Otway's "Venice Preserved" (1682).
[3] a character in Richard Steele's "Conscious Lovers" (1722).
[4] Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773).

Truth the soft robe of mild persuasion wears:
Thou to assenting reason giv'st again
Her own enlighten'd thoughts; call'd from the heart,
Th' obedient passions on thy voice attend;
And even reluctant party feels a while,
Thy gracious power: as through the varied maze
Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now strong,
Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood.
To thy lov'd haunt return, my happy Muse:
For now, behold, the joyous winter-days,
Frosty, succeed; and through the blue serene,
For sight too fine, th' ethereal nitre[1] flies;
Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
Storing afresh with elemental life.
Close crowds the shining atmosphere; and binds
Our strengthen'd bodies in its cold embrace,
Constringent; feeds, and animates our blood;
Refines our spirits, through the new-strung nerves,
In swifter sallies darting to the brain;
Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.
All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe
Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year.
A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
Of ruddy fire: and luculent[2] along
The purer rivers flow; their sullen deeps,
Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.
What art thou, Frost? and whence are thy keen stores
Deriv'd, thou secret all-invading power,
Whom even th' illusive fluid[3] cannot fly?
Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
Myriads of little salts, or hook'd, or shap'd
Like double wedges, and diffus'd immense
Through water, earth, and ether? Hence at eve,
Steam'd eager from the red horizon round,

[1] *frost.* [2] bright and clear.
[3] quicksilver, which freezes at 39 degrees below zero.

With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffus'd,
An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool,
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosen'd ice,
Let down the flood, and half dissolv'd by day,
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of heaven
Cemented firm; till, seiz'd from shore to shore,
The whole imprison'd river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
A double noise; while, at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the distant water-fall
Swells in the breeze; and with the hasty tread
Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and, all one cope
Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on;
Till morn, late rising o'er the drooping world,
Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
The various labour of the silent night:
Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb cascade,
Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
The pendent icicle; the frost-work fair,
Where transient hues, and fancy'd figures rise;
Wide-spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn;
The forest bent beneath the plumy wave;
And by the frost refin'd the whiter snow,
Incrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
His pining flock, or from the mountain-top,
Pleas'd with the slippery surface, swift descends.
 On blithesome frolics bent, the youthful swains,
While every work of man is laid at rest,
Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport

And revelry dissolv'd; where mixing glad,
Happiest of all the train! the raptur'd boy
Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine
Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
From every province swarming, void of care,
Batavia[1] rushes forth; and as they sweep,
On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
The then gay land is madden'd all to joy.
Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
The long-resounding course. Meantime, to raise
The manly strife, with highly-blooming charms,
Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters glow around.
 Pure, quick, and sportful, is the wholesome day;
But soon elaps'd. The horizontal sun,
Broad o'er the south, hangs at his utmost noon;
And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff.
His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
Relents a while to the reflected ray;
Or from the forest falls the cluster'd snow,
Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
Thunders the sport of those, who with the gun,
And dog impatient bounding at the shot,
Worse than the season, desolate the fields;
And, adding to the ruins of the year,
Distress the footed or the feather'd game.
 But what is this? Our infant Winter sinks,
Divested of his grandeur, should our eye
Astonish'd shoot into the frigid zone;
Where, for relentless months, continual Night,
Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry reign.
 There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,

[1] Holland, so called from the Batavi, the Roman name for the inhabitants of the island of Batavia at the mouth of the Rhine.—*Robertson.*

Barr'd by the hand of Nature from escape,
Wide-roams the Russian exile. Nought around
Strikes his sad eye, but deserts lost in snow;
And heavy loaded groves; and solid floods,
That stretch, athwart the solitary vast,
Their icy horrors to the frozen main;
And cheerless towns far-distant, never bless'd,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,[1]
With news of human-kind. Yet there life glows;
Yet cherish'd there, beneath the shining waste,
The furry nations harbour: tipt with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press;
Sables, of glossy black; and, dark-embrown'd,
Or beauteous freakt with many a mingled hue,
Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
There, warm together press'd, the trooping deer
Sleep on the new-fallen snows; and, scarce his head
Rais'd o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
The fearful-flying race; with ponderous clubs,
As weak against the mountain-heaps they push
Their beating breast in vain, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on th' ensanguin'd snows,
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.
There through the piny forest half-absorpt,
Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless bear,
With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn;
Slow-pac'd, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath th' inclement drift,
And, with stern patience, scorning weak
complaint,
Hardens his heart against assailing want.
Wide o'er the spacious regions of the north,
That see Boötes urge his tardy wain,[2]

[1] China.

[2] Boötes (the "Waggoner"). the constellation that seems to drive the Great Bear and the Little Bear in a circle around the pole.

A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus[1] pierc'd,
Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
Prolific swarm. They once relum'd the flame
Of lost mankind in polish'd slavery sunk,
Drove martial horde on horde, with dreadful sweep
Resistless rushing o'er th' enfeebled south,
And gave the vanquish'd world another form.
Not such the sons of Lapland: wisely they
Despise th' insensate barbarous trade of war;
They ask no more than simple Nature gives,
They love their mountains and enjoy their storms.
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time;
And through the restless ever-tortur'd maze
Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage.
Their rein-deer form their riches. These their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare, and cheerful cups.
Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift
O'er hill and dale, heap'd into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glaz'd.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With doubled lustre from the radiant waste,
Even in the depth of polar night they find
A wondrous day: enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland-fairs.
Wish'd Spring returns; and from the hazy south,
While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve;
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
Still round and round, his spiral course he winds,
And as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
Wheels up again, and reascends the sky.
In that glad season, from the lakes and floods
Where pure Niemi's fairy mountains rise,

[1] the northwest wind.

And fring'd with roses Tenglio rolls his stream,[1]
They draw the copious fry. With these, at eve,
They cheerful-loaded to their tents repair;
Where, all day long in useful cares employ'd,
Their kind unblemish'd wives the fire prepare.
Thrice happy race! by poverty secur'd
From legal plunder and rapacious power:
In whom fell interest never yet has sown
The seeds of vice; whose spotless swains ne'er knew
Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
Of faithless love, their blooming daughters woe.
 Still pressing on, beyond Tornea's lake,[2]
And Hecla[3] flaming through a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,
Where failing gradual life at length goes out,
The Muse expands her solitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another sky.
Thron'd in his palace of cerulean ice,
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court;
And through his airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is for ever heard:
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here arms his winds with all-subduing frost;
Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows,
With which he now oppresses half the globe.
 Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky;
And icy mountains, high on mountains pil'd,

[1] Thomson has these notes on these two lines: "M. de Maupertuis, in his book on The Figure of the Earth, after having described the beautiful lake and mountain of Niemi, in Lapland, says: 'From this height we had occasion several times to see those vapours rise from the lake which the people of the country call Haltios, and which they deem to be the guardian spirits of the mountains. We had been frightened with stories of bears that haunted this place, but saw none. It seemed rather a place of resort for fairies and genii than bears.' "The same author observes: 'I was surprised to see upon the banks of this river (the Tenglio) roses of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens.'"—*Robertson.*

[2] in the north of Sweden, near the Norwegian border.

[3] the volcano in Iceland.

Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid, o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down,
As if old chaos was again return'd,
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury; but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak expanse,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's[1] fate,
As with first prow, (what have not Britons dar'd!)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
In these fell regions, in Arzina[2] caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate seal'd, he with his hapless crew,
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues; to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.

Hard by these shores, where scarce his freezing stream
Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men;[3]
And, half enliven'd by the distant sun,
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
Here human nature wears its rudest form.
Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,

[1] Sir Hugh Willoughby, who in 1553 led a commercial expedition to discover the northeast passage to eastern Asia, and met the fate described by Thomson.

[2] east of the North Cape.

[3] The Samoyedes, inhabiting a territory between Obi and Yenesei.—*Robert-*

They waste the tedious gloom. Immers'd in furs,
Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest, nor song,
Nor tenderness they know; nor aught of life,
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without.
Till morn at length, her roses drooping all,
Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,
And calls the quiver'd savage to the chase.
What cannot active government perform,
New-moulding man? Wide-stretching from these shores,
A people savage from remotest time,
A huge neglected empire one vast mind,
By Heaven inspir'd, from Gothic darkness call'd.
Immortal Peter![1] First of monarchs! He
His stubborn country tam'd, her rocks, her fens,
Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons;
And, while the fierce barbarian he subdu'd,
To more exalted soul he raised the man.
Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toil'd
Through long successive ages to build up
A lab'ring plan of state, behold at once
The wonder done! Behold the matchless prince!
Who left his native throne, where reign'd till then
A mighty shadow of unreal power;
Who greatly spurn'd the slothful pomp of courts;
And, roaming every land, in every port,
His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
Unweary'd plying the mechanic tool,
Gather'd the seeds of trade, of useful arts,
Of civil wisdom, and of martial skill.
Charg'd with the stores of Europe home he goes!
Then cities rise amid th' illumin'd waste;
O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign;
Far-distant flood to flood[2] is social join'd;
Th' astonish'd Euxine hears the Baltic roar;
Proud navies ride on seas that never foam'd
With daring keel before; and armies stretch
Each way their dazzling files, repressing here
The frantic Alexander of the north,[3]

[1] Peter the Great, of Russia (1672–1725).
[2] as when the Volga and the Don were joined by canals.
[3] Charles XII. King of Sweden, defeated by the Russians at Pultava in 1709.

And awing there stern Othman's shrinking sons.[1]
Sloth flies the land, and ignorance, and vice,
Of old dishonour proud: it glows around,
Taught by the royal hand that rous'd the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade:
For what his wisdom plann'd, and power enforc'd
More potent still, his great example show'd.
 Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow-blustering from the south. Subdu'd,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains shine; loose sleet descends,
And floods the country round. The rivers swell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once;
And, where they rush, the wide-resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That wash th' ungenial pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave—
And hark! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep: at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark with trembling wretches charg'd,
That, tost amid the floating fragments, moors
Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror looks
More horrible. Can human force endure
Th' assembled mischiefs that besiege them round?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosen'd brine, while through the
 gloom,
Far, from the bleak inhospitable shore,

[1] The Turks, who were at war with Peter in 1711 through the machinations of Charles, when a guest of the Sultan. They were not so awed by the Russians as Thomson indicates.

Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famish'd monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet Providence, that ever-waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe,
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.

'Tis done!—dread Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictur'd life; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid hopes
Of happiness? those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? those busy bustling days?
Those gay-spent, festive nights? those veering thoughts,
Lost between good and ill, that shar'd thy life?
All now are vanish'd! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal, never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high.—And see!
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second birth
Of heaven, and earth! Awakening Nature hears
The new-creating word, and starts to life,
In every heighten'd form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To reason's eye refin'd clears up apace.
Ye vainly wise! ye blind presumptuous! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that Power,
And Wisdom oft arraign'd: see now the cause,
Why unassuming worth in secret liv'd,
And dy'd neglected: why the good man's share
In life was gall and bitterness of soul:
Why the lone widow, and her orphans pin'd,
In starving solitude; while luxury,

In palaces, lay straining her low thought,
To form unreal wants: why heaven-born truth,
And moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of superstition's scourge: why licens'd pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
Embitter'd all our bliss. Ye good distrest!
Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up a while,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil is no more:
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

(1726–44)

A Hymn

THESE,[1] as they change, Almighty Father! these,
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the summer-months,
With light, and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year.
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfin'd,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter, awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing,
Riding sublime, Thou bid'st the world adore,
And humblest Nature with thy northern blast.
Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep-felt, in these appear! A simple train,

[1] "The Seasons."

Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combin'd;
Shade, unperceiv'd, so softening into shade,
And all so forming an harmonious whole,
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand,
That, ever-busy, wheels the silent spheres;
Works in the secret deep; shoots, steaming, thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring:
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.
 Nature, attend; join every living soul,
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and, ardent, raise
One general song! To him, ye vocal gales,
Breathe soft; whose Spirit in your freshness breathes:
Oh talk of Him in solitary glooms!
Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely-waving pine
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,
Who shake th' astonish'd world, lift high to heaven
Th' impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills:
And let me catch it as I muse along.
Ye headlong torrents, rapid, and profound;
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze
Along the vale; and thou, majestic main,
A secret world of wonders in thyself,
Sound His stupendous praise; whose greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.
Soft-roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him; whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.
Ye forests, bend; ye harvests, wave to Him;
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,

Ye constellations, while your angels strike,
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.
Great source of day! best image here below
Of thy creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On nature write with every beam his praise,
The thunder rolls: be hush'd the prostrate world;
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.
Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks,
Retain the sound: the broad responsive low,
Ye valleys, raise; for the great Shepherd reigns;
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.
Ye woodlands all, awake: a boundless song
Burst from the groves; and when the restless day,
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
Sweetest of birds! sweet Philomela, charm
The listening shades, and teach the night his praise.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles;
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great hymn! In swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long-resounding voice, oft-breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling bass;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,
And find a fane in every sacred grove;
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still sing the God of Seasons, as they roll.
For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the Summer-ray
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams;
Or Winter rises in the blackening east;
Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat.
Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me;

Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital spreads there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey, there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs and all their sons,
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression.—But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable!
Come then, expressive Silence, muse his praise.

(1730)

The Castle of Indolence

CANTO I

The Castle hight of Indolence,
And its false luxury;
Where for a little time, alas!
We lived right jollily.

I

O MORTAL man, who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date:
And, certes, there is for it reason great;
For, though sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
And curse thy stars, and early drudge and late,
Withouten that would come an heavier bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

II

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
A most enchanting wizard did abide,

Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrown'd,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared even for play.

III

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,[1]
From poppies breath'd; and beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime, unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled everywhere their waters sheen;
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

IV

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
And now and then sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep:
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

V

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms were seen to move,
As Idless fancy'd in her dreaming mood.
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

[1] cast.

VI

A pleasing land of drowsyhed it was:
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer-sky:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hover'd nigh;
But whate'er smack'd of 'noyance, or unrest,
Was far far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

VII

The landskip such, inspiring perfect ease,
Where Indolence (for so the wizard hight[1])
Close-hid his castle 'mid embowering trees,
That half shut out the beams of Phœbus bright,
And made a kind of checker'd day and night.
Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate,
Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
Was plac'd; and to his lute, of cruel fate,
And labour harsh, complain'd, lamenting man's estate.

VIII

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,
From all the roads of earth that pass there by:
For, as they chanc'd to breathe on neighbouring hill,
The freshness of this valley smote their eye,
And drew them ever and anon more nigh,
Till clustering round th' enchanter false they hung,
Ymolten with his syren melody;
While o'er th' enfeebling lute his hand he flung,
And to the trembling chord these tempting verses sung:

IX

"Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!
See all but man with unearn'd pleasure gay.
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May.
What youthful bride can equal her array?

[1] was called.

Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

X

"Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,
The swarming songsters of the careless grove,
Ten thousand throats! that, from the flowering thorn,
Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love,
Such grateful kindly raptures them emove:
They neither plough, nor sow; ne, fit for flail,
E'er to the barn the nodding sheaves they drove;
Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,
Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

XI

"Outcast of nature, man! the wretched thrall
Of bitter-dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,
Of cares that eat away thy heart with gall,
And of the vices, an inhuman train,
That all proceed from savage thirst of gain:
For when hard-hearted Interest first began
To poison earth, Astræa[1] left the plain;
Guile, Violence, and Murder seiz'd on man;
And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers ran.

XII

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load of life
Push hard up hill; but as the farthest steep
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,
And hurls your labours to the valley deep,
Forever vain: come, and, withouten fee,
I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
Your cares, your toils; will steep you in a sea
Of full delight: O come, ye weary wights, to me!

[1] The goddess of Justice, who lived among men during the Golden Age. When men grew wicked, she withdrew to heaven and was placed among the stars under the name of Virgo.

XIII

"With me, you need not rise at early dawn,
To pass the joyless day in various stounds;[1]
Or, louting[2] low, on upstart fortune fawn,
And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds;
Or through the city take your dirty rounds,
To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,
Now flattering base, now giving secret wounds;
Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,
In venal senate thieve, or rob on broad highway.

XIV

"No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,
From village on to village sounding clear;
To tardy swain no shrill-voic'd matrons squall;
No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear;
No hammers thump; no horrid blacksmith sear,
Ne noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers start,
With sounds that are a misery to hear:
But all is calm, as would delight the heart
Of Sybarite of old, all nature, and all art.

XV

"Here nought but candour reigns, indulgent ease,
Good-natur'd lounging, sauntering up and down:
They who are pleas'd themselves must always please;
On others' ways they never squint a frown,
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town.
Thus, from the source of tender indolence,
With milky blood the heart is overflown,
Is sooth'd and sweeten'd by the social sense;
For interest, envy, pride, and strife are banish'd hence.

XVI

"What, what is virtue, but repose of mind?
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm;
Above the reach of wild ambition's wind,
Above those passions that this world deform,

[1] Times of trial or pain. Cf. Spenser's "Faerie Queen," I, viii, 25: "She could not endure that doleful stound."
[2] bowing.

And torture man, a proud malignant worm!
But here, instead, soft gales of passion play,
And gently stir the heart, thereby to form
A quicker sense of joy; as breezes stray
Across th' enliven'd skies, and make them still more gay.

XVII

"The best of men have ever lov'd repose:
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray;
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour grows,
Imbitter'd more from peevish day to day.
Even those whom fame has lent her fairest ray,
The most renown'd of worthy wights of yore,
From a base world at last have stolen away:
So Scipio,[1] to the soft Cumæan shore
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

XVIII

"But if a little exercise you choose,
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here.
Amid the groves you may indulge the muse,
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year;
Or softly stealing, with your wat'ry gear,
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry
You may delude: the whilst, amus'd, you hear
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's sigh,
Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

XIX

"O grievous folly! to heap up estate,
Losing the days you see beneath the sun;
When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting fate,
And gives th' untasted portion you have won,
With ruthless toil, and many a wretch undone,
To those who mock you gone to Pluto's reign,
There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows dun:
But sure it is of vanities most vain,
To toil for what you here untoiling may obtain."

[1] Scipio Africanus the younger (c.185–129 B.C.). See note on "Winter," l. 517. Cumæ was on the coast of Campania a few miles west of Naples.

XX

He ceas'd. But still their trembling ears retain'd
The deep vibrations of his witching song;
That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd
To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
Heaps pour'd on heaps, and yet they slip'd along
In silent ease: as when beneath the beam
Of summer moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood all silver'd with the gleam,
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal stream.

XXI

By the smooth demon so it order'd was,
And here his baneful bounty first began;
Though some there were who would not further pass,
And his alluring baits suspected han.
The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man.
Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye:
Not to move on, perdie, is all they can;
For do their very best they cannot fly,
But often each way look, and often sorely sigh.

XXII

When this the watchful wicked wizard saw,
With sudden spring he leap'd upon them straight;
And soon as touch'd by his unhallow'd paw,
They found themselves within the cursed gate;
Full hard to be repass'd, like that of fate.
Not stronger were of old the giant-crew,
Who sought to pull high Jove from regal state;
Though feeble wretch he seem'd, of sallow hue:
Certes, who bides his grasp will that encounter rue.

XXIII

For, whomsoe'er the villain takes in hand,
Their joints unknit, their sinews melt apace;
As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,
And of their vanish'd force remains no trace:
So when a maiden fair, of modest grace,
In all her buxom blooming May of charms,

Is seized in some losel's hot embrace,
She waxeth very weakly as she warms,
Then sighing yields her up to love's delicious charms.

XXIV

Wak'd by the crowd, slow from his bench arose
A comely full-spread porter, swoln with sleep:
His calm, broad, thoughtless aspect breath'd repose;
And in sweet torpor he was plunged deep,
Ne could himself from ceaseless yawning keep;
While o'er his eyes the drowsy liquor ran,
Through which his half-wak'd soul would faintly peep.
Then taking his black staff, he call'd his man,
And rous'd himself as much as rouse himself he can.

XXV

The lad leap'd lightly at his master's call.
He was, to weet, a little roguish page,
Save sleep and play who minded nought at all,
Like most the untaught striplings of his age.
This boy he kept each band to disengage,
Garters and buckles, task for him unfit,
But ill becoming his grave personage,
And which his portly paunch would not permit.
So this same limber page to all performed it.

XXVI

Meantime the master-porter wide display'd
Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns;
Wherewith he those who enter'd in array'd;
Loose, as the breeze that plays along the downs,
And waves the summer-woods when evening frowns.
O fair undress, best dress! it checks no vein,
But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns,
And heightens ease with grace. This done, right fain,
Sir Porter sat him down, and turn'd to sleep again.

XXVII

Thus easy-rob'd, they to the fountain sped,
That in the middle of the court up-threw

A stream, high spouting from its liquid bed,
And falling back again in drizzly dew:
There each deep draughts, as deep he thirsted, drew.
It was a fountain of nepenthe rare:
Whence, as Dan Homer sings, huge pleasaunce grew,
And sweet oblivion of vile earthly care;
Fair gladsome waking thoughts, and joyous dreams more fair.

XXVIII

This rite perform'd, all inly pleas'd and still,
Withouten trump, was proclamation made:
"Ye sons of Indolence, do what you will,
And wander where you list, through hall or glade:
Be no man's pleasure for another's staid;
Let each as likes him best his hours employ,
And curs'd be he who minds his neighbour's trade!
Here dwells kind ease, and unreproving joy:
He little merits bliss who others can annoy."

XXIX

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming round,
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,
But every man stroll'd off his own glad way.
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertain'd,
No living creature could be seen to stray;
While solitude, and perfect silence reign'd:
So that to think you dreamt you almost was constrain'd.

XXX

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles,[1]
Plac'd far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be, lone fancy him beguiles;
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,[2]

[1] The Hebrides on the west coast of Scotland. [2] the sun sets.

A vast assembly moving to and fro:
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

XXXI

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound!
Whose soft dominion o'er this castle sways,
And all the widely-silent places round,
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.
But how shall I attempt such arduous string?
I who have spent my nights and nightly days,
In this soul-deadening place, loose-loitering?
Ah! how shall I for this uprear my moulted wing?

XXXII

Come on, my muse, nor stoop to low despair,
Thou imp of Jove, touch'd by celestial fire!
Thou yet shalt sing of war, and actions fair,
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire;
Of ancient bards thou yet shalt sweep the lyre;
Thou yet shalt tread in tragic pall the stage,
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,
The sage's calm, the patriot's noble rage,
Dashing corruption down through every worthless age.

XXXIII

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming bell,
Ne cursed knocker ply'd by villain's hand,
Self-open'd into halls, where, who can tell
What elegance and grandeur wide expand
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land?
Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,
And couches stretch around in seemly band;
And endless pillows rise to prop the head;
So that each spacious room was one full-swelling bed.

XXXIV

And everywhere huge cover'd tables stood,
With wines high-flavour'd and rich viands crown'd;
Whatever sprightly juice, or tasteful food,

On the green bosom of this earth are found,
And all old ocean genders in his round:
Some hand unseen these silently display'd,
Even undemanded by a sign or sound;
You need but wish, and, instantly obey'd,
Fair-rang'd the dishes rose, and thick the glasses play'd.

XXXV

Here freedom reign'd, without the least alloy;
Nor gossip's tale, nor ancient maiden's gall,
Nor saintly spleen durst murmur at our joy,
And with envenom'd tongue our pleasures pall.
For why? There was but one great rule for all;
To wit, that each should work his own desire,
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may fall,
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,
And carol what, unbid, the muses might inspire.

XXXVI

The rooms with costly tapestry were hung,
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale;
Such as of old the rural poets sung
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale:
Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale,
Pour'd forth at large the sweetly tortur'd heart;
Or, looking tender passion, swell'd the gale,
And taught charm'd echo to resound their smart;
While flocks, woods, streams around, repose and peace impart.

XXXVII

Those pleas'd the most, where, by a cunning hand,
Depeinten was the patriarchal age;
What time Dan Abraham left the Chaldee land,[1]
And pastur'd on from verdant stage to stage,
Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.
Toil was not then. Of nothing took they heed,
But with wild beasts the silvan war to wage,
And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed:
Blessed sons of nature they! true golden age indeed!

[1] See Genesis, xi, 31; xii and xiii.

XXXVIII

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landskips rise,
Or Autumn's vary'd shades imbrown the walls:
Now the black tempest strikes the astonish'd eyes;
Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies;
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies;
Whate'er Lorrain[1] light-touch'd with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa[2] dash'd, or learned Poussin[3] drew.

XXXIX

Each sound too here to languishment inclin'd,
Lull'd the weak bosom, and induced ease.
Aerial music in the warbling wind,
At distance rising oft, by small degrees,
Nearer and nearer came, till o'er the trees
It hung, and breath'd such soul-dissolving airs,
As did, alas! with soft perdition please:
Entangled deep in its enchanting snares,
The listening heart forgot all duties and all cares.

XL

A certain music, never known before,
Here sooth'd the pensive, melancholy mind;
Full easily obtain'd. Behoves no more,
But sidelong, to the gently waving wind,
To lay the well-tun'd instrument reclin'd;
From which, with airy flying fingers light,
Beyond each mortal touch the most refin'd,
The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight:
Whence, with just cause, *The Harp of Œolus* it hight.[4]

[1] Claude Lorraine (1600–1682), a French painter from Lorraine (hence his name).

[2] Salvator Rosa (1615–1673). Like Claude, a landscape painter.

[3] Nicholas Poussin (1594–1665), a Frenchman who, like Rosa, settled and worked in Rome until his death.

[4] The Æolian harp played by the wind passing over the strings of the instrument; a very suitable method of producing music for the "Castle of Indolence."

XLI

Ah me! what hand can touch the strings so fine?
Who up the lofty diapason roll
Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul?
Now rising love they fan'd; now pleasing dole
They breath'd, in tender musings, through the heart;
And now a graver sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands an hymn impart:
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art!

XLII

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state,
Of Caliphs old, who on the Tygris' shore,
In mighty Bagdat, populous and great,
Held their bright court, where was of ladies store;
And verse, love, music still the garland wore:
When sleep was coy, the bard, in waiting there,
Cheer'd the lone midnight with the muse's lore;
Composing music bade his dreams be fair,
And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

XLIII

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran
Soft-tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,
And sobbing breezes sigh'd, and oft began
(So work'd the wizard) wintry storms to swell,
As heaven and earth they would together mell:
At doors and windows, threatening, seem'd to call
The demons of the tempest, growling fell,
Yet the least entrance found they none at all;
Whence sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy hall.

XLIV

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,
Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace;
O'er which were shadowy cast Elysian gleams,
That play'd, in waving lights, from place to place,
And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.
Not Titian's[1] pencil e'er could so array,

[1] Vicelli Tiziano or Titian (1480–1576).

So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space;
Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,
As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

XLV

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!
My Muse will not attempt your fairy-land:
She has no colours that like you can glow;
To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.
But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band
Than these same guileful angel-seeming sprights,
Who thus in dreams, voluptuous, soft, and bland,
Pour'd all th' Arabian heav'n upon our nights,
And bless'd them oft besides with more refin'd delights.

XLVI

They were, in sooth, a most enchanting train,
Even feigning virtue; skilful to unite
With evil good, and strew with pleasure pain.
But for those fiends, whom blood and broils delight;
Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright,
Down, down black gulfs, where sullen waters sleep,
Or hold him clambering all the fearful night
On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep:
They, till due time should serve, were bid far hence to keep.

XLVII

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is dear,
From these foul demons shield the midnight gloom!
Angels of fancy and of love, be near,
And o'er the wilds of sleep diffuse a bloom;
Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and Rome,
And let them virtue with a look impart!
But chief, a while, O lend us from the tomb
Those long lost friends for whom in love we smart,
And fill with pious awe and joy-mixed woe the heart!

XLVIII

Or are you sportive?—bid the morn of youth
Rise to new light, and beam afresh the days
Of innocence, simplicity, and truth;

To cares estrang'd, and manhood's thorny ways.
What transport, to retrace our boyish plays,
Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supply'd;
The woods, the mountains, and the warbling maze
Of the wild brooks!—But, fondly wandering wide,
My Muse, resume the task that yet doth thee abide.

XLIX

One great amusement of our household was,
In a huge crystal magic globe to spy,
Still as you turn'd it, all things that do pass
Upon this ant-hill earth; where constantly
Of idly-busy men the restless fry
Run bustling to and fro with foolish haste,
In search of pleasures vain, that from them fly,
Or which, obtain'd, the caitiffs dare not taste:
When nothing is enjoy'd, can there be greater waste?

L

Of Vanity the Mirror this was call'd.
Here you a muckworm of the town might see,
At his dull desk, amid his ledgers stall'd,
Eat up with carking care and penurie;
Most like to carcase parch'd on gallow-tree.
"A penny saved is a penny got":
Firm to this scoundrel maxim keepeth he,
Ne of its rigour will he bate a jot,
Till it has quench'd his fire, and banished his pot.

LI

Straight from the filth of this low grub, behold!
Comes fluttering forth a gaudy spendthrift heir,
All glossy gay, enamel'd all with gold,
The silly tenant of the summer-air.
In folly lost, of nothing takes he care;
Pimps, lawyers, stewards, harlots, flatterers vile,
And thieving tradesmen him among them share:
His father's ghost from limbo-lake, the while,
Sees this, which more damnation does upon him pile.

LII

This globe portray'd the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page
Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the pen,
As if inspir'd and in a Thespian[1] rage;
Then write and blot, as would your ruth engage.
Why, authors, all this scrawl and scribbling sore?
To lose the present, gain the future age,
Praised to be when you can hear no more,
And much enrich'd with fame when useless worldly store.

LIII

Then would a splendid city rise to view,
With carts, and cars, and coaches roaring all:
Wide-pour'd abroad behold the prowling crew;
See how they dash along from wall to wall!
At every door hark, how they thundering call!
Good lord! what can this giddy rout excite?
Why? each on each to prey, by guile or gall;
With flattery these, with slander those to blight,
And make new tiresome parties for the coming night.

LIV

The puzzling sons of party next appear'd,
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met;
And now they whisper'd close, now shrugging rear'd
Th' important shoulder; then, as if to get
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward set.
No sooner Lucifer[2] recalls affairs,
Than forth they various rush in mighty fret;
When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their cares,
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.

LV

But what most show'd the vanity of life,
Was to behold the nations all on fire,
In cruel broils engag'd, and deadly strife:

[1] Thespis, the traditional father of Greek tragedy, who flourished in the sixth century, B.C.
[2] *the morning star.*

Most Christian kings, inflam'd by black desire,
With honourable ruffians in their hire,
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour:
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,
They sit them down just where they were before,
Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their force restore.

LVI

To number up the thousands dwelling here,
An useless were, and eke an endless task:
From kings, and those who at the helm appear,
To gipsies brown, in summer-glades who bask.
Yea, many a man, perdie, I could unmask,
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,
With tape-ty'd trash, and suits of fools that ask
For place or pension, laid in decent row;
But these I passen by, with nameless numbers moe.

LVII

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,
There was a man of special grave remark:
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
Pensive, not sad; in thought involv'd, not dark.
As soot[1] this man could sing as morning-lark,
And teach the noblest morals of the heart:
But these his talents were ybury'd stark;
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,
Which or boon nature gave, or nature-painting art.

LVIII

To noontide shades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound;
Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,
Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,
Where the wild thyme and camomil are found:
There would he linger, till the latest ray
Of light sat quivering on the welkin's bound:
Then homeward through the twilight shadows stray,
Sauntering and slow. So had he passed many a day.

[1] sweetly.

LIX

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they past;
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd
Emongst the sleeping embers, mounted fast,
And all its native light anew reveal'd.
Oft as he travers'd the cerulean field,
And mark'd the clouds that drove before the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind;
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

LX

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,
(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)
One shyer still, who quite detested talk:[1]
Oft, stung by spleen, at once away he broke,
To groves of pine, and broad o'ershadowing oak;
There, inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,
And on himself his pensive fury wroke,
Ne ever utter'd word, save when first shone
The glittering star of eve—"Thank heaven! the day is done."

LXI

Here lurk'd a wretch, who had not crept abroad
For forty years, ne face of mortal seen;
In chamber brooding like a loathly toad:
And sure his linen was not very clean.
Through secret loophole, that had practis'd been
Near to his bed, his dinner vile he took;
Unkempt, and rough, of squalid face and mien,
Our castle's shame! whence, from his filthy nook,
We drove the villain out for fitter lair to look.

LXII

One day there chanc'd into these halls to rove
A joyous youth, who took you at first sight;
Him the wild wave of pleasure hither drove,

[1] John Armstrong (1709–1779), who in 1744 produced his poem the "Art of Preserving Health." See p. 541.

Before the sprightly tempest tossing light:
Certes, he was a most engaging wight,
Of social glee, and wit humane though keen,
Turning the night to day and day to night:
For him the merry bells had rung, I ween,
If in this nook of quiet bells had ever been.

LXIII

But not even pleasure to excess is good:
What most elates then sinks the soul as low;
When springtide joy pours in with copious flood,
The higher still th' exulting billows flow,
The farther back again they flagging go,
And leave us groveling on the dreary shore:
Taught by this son of joy, we found it so;
Who, whilst he staid, kept in a gay uproar
Our madden'd castle all, th' abode of sleep no more.

LXIV

As when in prime of June a burnish'd fly,
Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps along,
Cheer'd by the breathing bloom and vital sky,
Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,
Soothing at first the gay reposing throng:
And oft he sips their bowl; or, nearly drown'd,
He, thence recovering, drives their beds among,
And scares their tender sleep, with trump profound;
Then out again he flies, to wing his mazy round.

LXV

Another guest there was, of sense refin'd,
Who felt each worth, for every worth he had;
Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
As little touch'd as any man's with bad:
Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,
To him the sacred love of nature lent,
And sometimes would he make our valley glad;
Whenas we found he would not here be pent,
To him the better sort this friendly message sent:

LXVI

"Come, dwell with us! true son of virtue, come!
But if, alas! we cannot thee persuade,
To lie content beneath our peaceful dome,
Ne ever more to quit our quiet glade;
Yet when at last thy toils, but ill apaid,
Shall dead thy fire, and damp its heavenly spark,
Thou wilt be glad to seek the rural shade,
There to indulge the muse, and nature mark:
We then a lodge for thee will rear in Hagley Park."[1]

LXVII

Here whilom ligg'd[2] th' Esopus[3] of the age;
But call'd by fame, in soul ypricked deep,
A noble pride restor'd him to the stage,
And rous'd him like a giant from his sleep.
Even from his slumbers we advantage reap:
With double force th' astonish'd scene he wakes,
Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep
Each due decorum: now the heart he shakes,
And now with well-urg'd sense th' enlighten'd judgment takes.

LXVIII

A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems;
Who,[4] void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes,
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain,
The world forsaking with a calm disdain:
Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat,
Here quaff'd encircled with the joyous train;
Oft moralizing sage; his ditty sweet
He loathed much to write, ne cared to repeat.

[1] The seat of George, Lord Lyttelton (1709–1773), the guest of l. 577. He wrote a poem, "To the Memory of a Lady: A Monody," in 1747.

[2] lay.

[3] Claudius Esopus was the greatest Roman actor of tragedy. Here he stands for James Quin (1693–1766), who was regarded as the first actor in England until he was displaced in popular favor by Garrick.

[4] The following lines of this stanza were writ by a friend of the author.—*Thomson.* They are generally ascribed to Lord Lyttelton (l. 594). The whole stanza is descriptive of Thomson.

LXIX

Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,
Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.
A little, round, fat, oily man of God,[1]
Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry:
He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
If a tight damsel chanc'd to trippen by;
Which when observ'd, he shrunk into his mew,
And straight would recollect his piety anew.

LXX

Nor be forgot a tribe, who minded nought
(Old inmates of the place) but state-affairs:
They look'd, perdie, as if they deeply thought;
And on their brow sat every nation's cares.
The world by them is parcel'd out in shares,
When in the Hall of Smoke they congress hold,
And the sage berry[2] sun-burnt Mocha bears
Has clear'd their inward eye: then, smoke-enroll'd,
Their oracles break forth, mysterious as of old.

LXXI

Here languid Beauty kept her pale-fac'd court:
Bevies of dainty dames, of high degree,
From every quarter hither made resort;
Where, from gross mortal care and business free,
They lay, pour'd out in ease and luxury.
Or should they a vain shew of work assume,
Alas! and well-a-day! what can it be?
To knot, to twist, to range the vernal bloom;
But far is cast the distaff, spinning-wheel, and loom.

LXXII

Their only labour was to kill the time;
And labour dire it is, and weary woe.
They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme;
Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,

[1] Thomson's friend and biographer, Reverend Patrick Murdock (d. 1774).
[2] Coffee bears a bean, not a berry.

Or saunter forth, with tottering step and slow:
This soon too rude an exercise they find;
Straight on the couch their limbs again they throw,
Where hours on hours they sighing lie reclin'd,
And court the vapoury god soft-breathing in the wind.

LXXIII

Now must I mark the villany we found,
But ah! too late, as shall eftsoons be shewn.
A place here was, deep, dreary, under ground;
Where still our inmates, when unpleasing grown,
Diseas'd, and loathsome, privily were thrown.
Far from the light of heaven, they languish'd there,
Unpity'd uttering many a bitter groan;
For of these wretches taken was no care:
Fierce fiends, and hags of hell, their only nurses were.

LXXIV

Alas! the change! from scenes of joy and rest,[1]
To this dark den, where sickness toss'd alway.
Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep opprest,
Stretch'd on his back a mighty lubbard lay,
Heaving his sides, and snored night and day:
To stir him from his traunce it was not eath,
And his half-open'd eyne he shut straightway:
He led, I wot, the softest way to death,
And taught withouten pain and strife to yield the breath.

LXXV

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsy:
Unwieldy man! with belly monstrous round,
For ever fed with watery supply;
For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.
And moping here did Hypochondria sit,
Mother of spleen, in robes of various dye,
Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit;
And some her frantic deem'd, and some her deem'd a wit.

[1] These lines were written by the Dr. Armstrong of l. 534.

LXXVI

A lady proud she was, of ancient blood,
Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low:
She felt, or fancy'd in her fluttering mood,
All the diseases which the spittles know,
And sought all physic which the shops bestow,
And still new leeches and new drugs would try,
Her humour ever wavering to and fro:
For sometimes she would laugh, and sometimes cry,
Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew not why.

LXXVII

Fast by her side a listless maiden pin'd,
With aching head, and squeamish heart-burnings;
Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,
Yet lov'd in secret all forbidden things.
And here the Tertian shakes his chilling wings;
The sleepless Gout here counts the crowing cocks,
A wolf now gnaws him, now a serpent stings;
Whilst Apoplexy cramm'd Intemperance knocks
Down to the ground at once, as butcher felleth ox.

(1736–48)

William Somerville

1675–1742

WILLIAM SOMERVILLE, who came of an ancient family long settled in Gloucestershire, was born in Edstone, Warwickshire, on September 2, 1675. His early education was received, it was said, at Stratford on Avon. In 1690 he was admitted to Winchester School as "founder's kin." Thence he proceeded to New College, Oxford, where he won a fellowship, which he held till 1705. In 1696 he entered the Middle Temple as a student, but on his father's death he settled at Edstone for the rest of his life, as a country gentleman with an enthusiasm for field sports. He had a comfortable income of £1500 a year, but out of that he had to pay £600 to his mother, whose death, at the age of ninety-eight, was only one month before his own. In 1712 he addressed some verses to the Earl of Halifax and Addison. His first published volume, "The Two Springs," did not come out until 1725. Two years later it was followed by "Occasional Poems, Translations, Fables, Tales." In 1735 his most famous production, "The Chace," appeared, and in 1740 "Hobbinol, or the Rural Games," a burlesque in blank verse dedicated to Hogarth. Two years later his "Field Sports," a poem on hawking, a sort of supplement to "The Chace," came out shortly before his death on July 19, 1742.

EDITIONS

Anderson: "British Poets." Vol. VIII. 1795.

Chalmers: "English Poets" (with Johnson's Life), Vol. XI. 1810.

Aureng-Zebe, A Tragedy, by John Dryden; and Book II of The Chace, a Poem by William Somerville. Edited, with biographical memoirs and notes, by Kenneth Deighton. 1892.

On Presenting to a Lady A White Rose and a Red on the Tenth of June[1]

If this pale rose offend your sight,
It in your bosom wear,
'Twill blush to find itself less white,
And turn Lancastrian there.

But, Celia, should the red be chose,
With gay vermilion bright,
'Twould sicken at each blush that glows,
And in despair turn white.

Let politicians idly prate,
Their Babels build in vain;
As uncontrollable as Fate,
Imperial Love shall reign.

Each haughty faction shall obey,
And Whigs and Tories join,
Submit to your despotic sway,
Confess your Right Divine.

Yet this, (my gracious Monarch) own,
They're tyrants that oppress;
'Tis Mercy must support your throne,
And 'tis like Heav'n to bless.

(1727)

The Chace

BOOK II

Hail, gentle Dawn! Mild blushing Goddess, hail!
Rejoic'd I see thy purple mantle spread
O'er half the skies, gems pave thy radiant way,
And orient pearls from ev'ry shrub depend.

[1] The birthday of the old Pretender, James Francis, Edward Stuart (1688–1765).

Farewell, Cleora; here deep sunk in down
Slumber secure, with happy dreams amus'd,
'Till grateful steams shall tempt thee to receive
Thy early meal, or thy officious maids,
The toilet plac'd, shall urge thee to perform
Th' important work. Me other joys invite,
The horn sonorous calls, the pack awak'd
Their matins chant, nor brook my long delay.
My courser hears their voice; see there with ears
And tail erect, neighing he paws the ground;
Fierce rapture kindles in his red'ning eyes,
And boils in ev'ry vein. As captive boys
Cow'd by the ruling rod, and haughty frowns
Of pedagogues severe, from their hard tasks
If once dismiss'd, no limits can contain
The tumult rais'd, within their little breasts,
But give a loose to all their frolic play:
So from their kennel rush the joyous pack;
A thousand wanton gaieties express
Their inward ecstasy, their pleasing sport
Once more indulg'd, and liberty restor'd.
The rising sun that o'er th' horizon peeps,
As many colours from their glossy skins
Beaming reflects, as paint the various bow
When April show'rs descend. Delightful scene!
Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs,
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh-blooming health, and universal joy.
 Huntsman, lead on! behind the clust'ring pack
Submiss attend, hear with respect thy whip
Loud-clanging, and thy harsher voice obey:
Spare not the straggling cur, that wildly roves;
But let thy brisk assistant on his back
Imprint thy just resentments; let each lash
Bite to the quick, 'till howling he return
And whining creep amid the trembling crowd.
 Here on this verdant spot, where Nature kind,
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes;
Where flow'rs autumnal spring, and the rank mead
Affords the wand'ring hares a rich repast;

Throw off[1] thy ready pack. See, where they spread
And range around, and dash the glitt'ring dew.
If some stanch hound, with his authentic voice,
Avow the recent trail, the justling tribe
Attend his call, then with one mutual cry,
The welcome news confirm, and echoing hills
Repeat the pleasing tale. See how they thread
The brakes, and up yon furrow drive along!
But quick they back recoil, and wisely check
Their eager haste; then o'er the fallow'd ground
How leisurely they work, and many a pause
Th' harmonious concert breaks; 'till more assur'd
With joy redoubled the low valleys ring.
What artful labyrinths perplex their way!
Ah! there she lies; how close! she pants, she doubts
If now she lives; she trembles as she sits,
With horror seiz'd. The wither'd grass that clings
Around her head, of the same russet hue,
Almost deceiv'd my sight, had not her eyes
With life full-beaming her vain wiles betray'd.
At distance draw thy pack, let all be hush'd,
No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard,
Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain
Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice.
Now gently put her off; see how direct
To her known Muse[2] she flies! Here, huntsman, bring
(But without hurry) all thy jolly hounds,
And calmly lay them in.[3] How low they stoop,
And seem to plough the ground! then all at once
With greedy nostrils snuff the fuming stream[4]
That glads their flutt'ring hearts. As winds let loose
From the dark caverns of the blust'ring god,
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn.
Hope gives them wings, while she's spur'd on by fear.
The welkin rings, men, dogs, hills, rocks, and woods
In the full consort join. Now, my brave youths,
Stript for the chace, give all your souls to joy!

[1] send after game.

[2] Meuse; an opening or gap in a fence or hedge through which game, especially hares, habitually pass, and through which they run, when hunted, for relief.—*N.E.D.*

[3] Send them in pursuit.—*Deighton.* [4] reeking scent.

See how their coursers, than the mountain roe
More fleet, the verdant carpet skim, thick clouds
Snorting they breathe, their shining hoofs scarce print
The grass unbruis'd; with emulation fir'd
They strain to lead the field, top the barr'd gate,
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush
The thorny-twining hedge: the riders bend
O'er their arch'd necks; with steady hands, by turns
Indulge their speed, or moderate their rage.
Where are their sorrows, disappointments, wrongs,
Vexations, sickness, cares? All, all are gone,
And with the panting winds lag far behind.
 Huntsman! her gait observe, if in wide rings
She wheel her mazy way, in the same round
Persisting still, she'll foil the beaten track.[1]
But if she fly, and with the fav'ring wind
Urge her bold course; less intricate thy task:
Push on thy pack. Like some poor exil'd wretch
The frighted chace leaves her late dear abodes,
O'er plains remote she stretches far away,
Ah! never to return! for greedy death
Hov'ring exults, secure to seize his prey.
 Hark! from yon covert, where those tow'ring oaks
Above the humble copse aspiring rise,
What glorious triumphs burst in ev'ry gale
Upon our ravish'd ears! The hunters shout,
The clanging horns swell their sweet-winding notes,
The pack wide-op'ning load the trembling air
With various melody; from tree to tree
The propagated cry, redoubling bounds,
And winged zephirs waft the floating joy
Thro' all the regions near: afflictive birch
No more the school-boy dreads, his prison broke,
Scamp'ring he flies, nor heeds his master's call;
The weary traveller forgets his road,
And climbs th' adjacent hill; the ploughman leaves
Th' unfinish'd furrow; nor his bleating flocks
Are now the shepherd's joy; men, boys, and girls
Desert th' unpeopled village; and wild crowds

[1] Run over or cross the ground with the effect of baffling the hounds.—*N.E.D.*

Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet frenzy seiz'd.
Look, how she pants! and o'er yon op'ning glade
Slips glancing by; while, at the further end,
The puzzling pack unravel wile by wile
Maze within maze. The covert's utmost bound
Slyly she skirts; behind them cautious creeps,
And in that very track, so lately stain'd
By all the steaming crowd, seems to pursue
The foe she flies. Let cavillers deny
That brutes have reason; sure 'tis something more,
'Tis Heav'n directs, and stratagems inspires,
Beyond the short extent of human thought.
But hold——I see her from the covert break;
Sad on yon little eminence she sits;
Intent she listens with one ear erect,
Pond'ring, and doubtful what new course to take,
And how t' escape the fierce blood-thirsty crew,
That still urge on, and still in volleys loud,
Insult her woes, and mock her sore distress.
As now in louder peals, the loaded winds
Bring on the gath'ring storm, her fears prevail;
And o'er the plain, and o'er the mountain's ridge,
Away she flies; nor ships with wind and tide,
And all their canvas wings scud half so fast.
Once more, ye jovial train, your courage try,
And each clean courser's speed. We scour along
In pleasing hurry and confusion tost;
Oblivion to be wish'd. The patient pack
Hang on the scent unweary'd; up they climb,
And ardent we pursue; our lab'ring steeds
We press, we gore;[1] till once the summit gain'd,
Painfully panting, there we breathe awhile;
Then like a foaming torrent, pouring down
Precipitant, we smoke along the vale.
Happy the man, who with unrival'd speed
Can pass his fellows, and with pleasure view
The struggling pack; how in the rapid course
Alternate they preside, and justling push
To guide the dubious scent; how giddy youth
Oft babbling errs, by wiser age reprov'd;

[1] pierce or stab with spurs.

How, niggard of his strength, the wise old hound
Hangs in the rear, 'till some important point
Rouse all his diligence, or 'till the chace
Sinking he finds; then to the head he springs,
With thirst of glory fir'd, and wins the prize.
 Huntsman, take heed; they stop in full career.
Yon crowding flocks, that at a distance gaze,
Have haply foil'd the turf. See! that old hound
How busily he works, but dares not trust
His doubtful sense; draw yet a wider ring,
Hark! how again the chorus fills. As bells
Sally'd[1] a while at once their peal renew,
And high in air the tuneful thunder rolls.
See, how they toss, with animated rage
Recov'ring all they lost!—That eager haste
Some doubling wile foreshows.—Ah! yet once more
They're check'd—hold back with speed—on either hand
They flourish round—ev'n yet persist.—'Tis right,
Away they spring; the rustling stubbles bend
Beneath the driving storm. Now the poor chace
Begins to flag, to her last shifts reduc'd.
From brake to brake she flies, and visits all
Her well-known haunts, where once she rang'd secure,
With love and plenty blest. See! there she goes,
She reels along, and by her gate betrays
Her inward weakness. See, how black she looks!
The sweat that clogs th' obstructed pores, scarce leaves
A languid scent. And now in open view
See, see, she flies! each eager hound exerts
His utmost speed, and stretches ev'ry nerve.
How quick she turns! their gaping jaws eludes,
And yet a moment lives; 'till round inclos'd
By all the greedy pack, with infant screams
She yields her breath, and there reluctant dies. . . .

(1735)

[1] Bells brought to the position of "sally," which is the first movement of a bell when "set" for ringing.—*N.E.D.*

Thomas Tickell

1686–1740

THOMAS TICKELL, the son of the vicar of Bridekirk, Cumberland, was born in his father's parish in 1686. He entered Queen's College, Oxford, in 1701 and graduated B.A. in 1705 and proceeded to his M.A. in 1709. On November 8, 1710, he was appointed fellow of his college and remained there until his marriage in 1726. He had to secure a dispensation from the Crown to enable him to enter upon his fellowship, since he refused to take orders. In 1711 he was made university reader, or professor of poetry. In the following year he published a poem in folio form, "To His Excellency the Lord Privy Seal, on the Prospect of Peace," which, though it supported the Tory policy of peace, was praised as a "noble performance" by the Whig Addison in *The Spectator* (No. 523). This marked the beginning of a close friendship between the two men. Tickell contributed, in turn, to *The Guardian* and to Steele's *Poetical Miscellanies*. In 1715 Tickell's translation of the first book of the "Iliad" appeared simultaneously with Pope's first volume of his translation. Tickell said his work was not intended as a rival but merely to bespeak sympathy for his translation of the "Odyssey"; but it produced bitter feeling on the part of Pope toward Tickell and Addison, who had praised Tickell's translation. Pope was always an easy person to offend. In 1717 Tickell was made under-secretary to Addison. His friendship with his chief led to his publishing in 1721 an edition in four volumes of Addison's works and to his writing an address, "To the Earl of Warwick on the Death of Mr. Addison," which was prefixed in the first volume of this edition. In 1722 he published an epistle "To Sir Godfrey Kneller at his Country Seat." The same year he migrated to Ireland and resided at Glasnevin near Dublin. He was made Secretary to the Lords Justices in 1724. He died in Bath, April 23, 1740, and was buried in Glasnevin.

EDITIONS

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Colin and Lucy

Of Leinster fam'd for maidens fair,
Bright Lucy was the grace;
Nor e'er did Liffy's limpid stream
Reflect so sweet a face:
Till luckless love, and pining care,
Impair'd her rosy hue,
Her coral lips, and damask cheeks,
And eyes of glossy blue.

Oh! have you seen a lily pale,
When beating rains descend?
So droop'd the slow-consuming maid,
Her life now near its end.
By Lucy warn'd, of flatt'ring swains
Take heed, ye easy fair;
Of vengeance due to broken vows,
Ye perjur'd swains, beware.

Three times, all in the dead of night,
A bell was heard to ring;
And shrieking at her window thrice,
The raven flap'd his wing.
Too well the love-lorn maiden knew
The solemn-boding sound:
And thus, in dying words, bespoke
The virgins weeping round:

"I hear a voice, you cannot hear,
Which says, I must not stay;
I see a hand, you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.
By a false heart, and broken vows,
In early youth I die:
Was I to blame, because his bride
Was thrice as rich as I?

"Ah, Colin! give not her thy vows,
Vows due to me alone:
Nor thou, fond maid, receive his kiss,
Nor think him all thy own.

Tomorrow, in the church to wed,
 Impatient, both prepare!
But know, fond maid; and know, false man,
 That Lucy will be there!

"Then bear my corpse, my comrades, bear,
 This bridegroom blithe to meet,
He in his wedding-trim so gay,
 I in my winding-sheet."
She spoke, she dy'd, her corse was borne,
 The bridegroom blithe to meet,
He in his wedding-trim so gay,
 She in her winding-sheet.

Then what were perjur'd Colin's thoughts?
 How were these nuptials kept?
The bridesmen flock'd round Lucy dead,
 And all the village wept.
Confusion, shame, remorse, despair,
 At once his bosom swell:
The damps of death bedew'd his brow,
 He shook, he groan'd, he fell.

From the vain bride, ah, bride no more!
 The varying crimson fled,
When, stretch'd before her rival's corse,
 She saw her husband dead.
Then to his Lucy's new-made grave,
 Convey'd by trembling swains,
One mould with her, beneath one sod,
 Forever he remains.

Oft at this grave, the constant hind
 And plighted maid are seen;
With garlands gay, and true-love knots,
 They deck the sacred green;
But, swain forsworn, whoe'er thou art,
 This hallow'd spot forbear;
Remember Colin's dreadful fate,
 And fear to meet him there.

(1729)

Henry Carey

c. 1687–1743

HENRY CAREY was said to have been the illegitimate son of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, who died in 1695. Mr. F. T. Wood, however, suggests that since there was a tradition that Carey was a posthumous child, his father may have been Henry Savile, a younger son of the Marquis, who died in 1687 and would thus fit in with the tradition. It is not unlikely that Carey was originally known as Henry Savile and that, when he went up to London some time before 1713, he adopted the name by which he is now known. We know very little about his early life in London, except that he seems to have taught music in boarding schools and to have done literary and musical work for the theatres. He brought out in 1713 a volume entitled "Poems on Several Occasions." From 1715 onwards, he produced farces and parodies on the stage, some of which were as successful as others were not, but none of which improved Carey's financial condition. A third edition of his "Poems" came out in 1729; it contained "Sally in our Alley" and "Namby-Pamby" as additions, the latter poem giving to Ambrose Philips the nickname by which he is usually known. Carey suffered at the hands of unscrupulous and piratical publishers with the result that he became utterly impoverished and in desperation hanged himself on October 4, 1743.

EDITION

The Poems of Henry Carey. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by Frederick T. Wood. 1930.

Sally in Our Alley

OF ALL the girls that are so smart,
There's none like pretty Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!
There is no lady in the land
Is half so sweet as Sally!

She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!

Her father, he makes cabbage nets;
And through the streets, does cry 'em:
Her mother, she sells laces long,
To such as please to buy 'em.
But, sure, such folks could ne'er beget
So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!

When she is by, I leave my work
(I love her so sincerely!);
My master comes, like any Turk,
And bangs me most severely.
But let him bang his bellyful!
I'll bear it all for Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!

Of all the days that's in the week,
I dearly love but one day!
And that's the day that comes betwixt
A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest, all in my best,
To walk abroad with Sally.
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!

My master carries me to church,
And often am I blam'd,
Because I leave him in the lurch,
As soon as text is nam'd.
I leave the church in sermon time,
And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley!

When Christmas comes about again,
O then I shall have money!

I'll hoard it up, and box and all
 I'll give it to my honey!
And, would it were ten thousand pounds,
 I'd give it all to Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
 And she lives in our alley!

My master and the neighbours all,
 Make game of me and Sally:
And (but for her,) I'd better be
 A slave, and row a galley!
But when my seven long years are out,
 O then, I'll marry Sally!
O then we'll wed, and then we'll bed;
 But not in our alley!

(Publ. 1729)

Matthew Green

1696–1737

MATTHEW GREEN was born in 1696 of a dissenting family, whose strict puritanism so disgusted him that he took up "some free notions on religious subjects." He had a position in the Custom House; it is recorded that he wrote a petition as coming from the Custom-House cats when their rations of two bowls of milk a day were in danger of being cut off by the authorities, and that he had his petition allowed. His first poem, "The Grotto," was privately printed in 1733. He died in 1737 in a lodging in Nag's Head Court, London. In the same year, after his death, his poem "The Spleen" made its appearance with a preface by his friend, Richard Glover.

EDITIONS

The Spleen and Other Poems. By Matthew Green. Preface by R. K. Wood. 1926.

Minor Poets of the Eighteenth Century. With an introduction by Hugh I'A. Fausset. 1929.

The Spleen

CONTENTMENT, parent of delight,
So much a stranger to our sight,
Say, goddess, in what happy place
Mortals behold thy blooming face;
Thy gracious auspices impart,
And for thy temple choose my heart.
They, whom thou deignest to inspire,
Thy science learn, to bound desire;
By happy alchymy of mind
They turn to pleasure all they find;
They both disdain in outward mien
The grave and solemn garb of Spleen,
And meretricious arts of dress,

To feign a joy, and hide distress;
Unmov'd when the rude tempest blows,
Without an opiate they repose;
And cover'd by your shield, defy
The whizzing shafts, that round them fly;
Nor, meddling with the gods' affairs,
Concern themselves with distant cares;
But place their bliss in mental rest,
And feast upon the good possest.
 Forc'd by soft violence of pray'r,
The blithesome goddess soothes my care,
I feel the deity inspire,
And thus she models my desire.
Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made,
A farm some twenty miles from town,
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own;
Two maids, that never saw the town,
A serving-man not quite a clown,
A boy to help to tread the mow,
And drive, while t'other holds the plough;
A chief of temper form'd to please,
Fit to converse, and keep the keys;
And better to preserve the peace,
Commission'd by the name of niece,
With understandings of a size
To think their master very wise.
May heaven (it's all I wish for) send
One genial room to treat a friend,
Where decent cupboard, little plate,
Display benevolence, not state.
And may my humble dwelling stand
Upon some chosen spot of land;
A pond before full to the brim,
Where cows may cool, and geese may swim;
Behind, a green like velvet neat,
Soft to the eye, and to the feet;
Where od'rous plants in evening fair
Breathe all around ambrosial air;
From Eurus, foe to kitchen ground,
Fenc'd by a slope with bushes crown'd,

Fit dwelling for the feather'd throng,
Who pay their quit-rents with a song;
With op'ning views of hill and dale,
Which sense and fancy too regale,
Where the half-cirque, which vision bounds,
Like amphitheatre surrounds;
And woods impervious to the breeze,
Thick phalanx of embodied trees,
From hills through plains in dusk array
Extended far repel the day.
Here stillness, height, and solemn shade
Invite, and contemplation aid:
Here nymphs from hollow oaks relate
The dark decrees and will of fate,
And dreams beneath the spreading beech
Inspire, and docile fancy teach;
While soft as breezy breath of wind,
Impulses rustle through the mind:
Here Dryads, scorning Phœbus' ray,
While Pan melodious pipes away,
In measur'd motions frisk about,
'Till old Silenus puts them out:
There see the clover, pea, and bean,
Vie in variety of green;
Fresh pastures speckled o'er with sheep,
Brown fields their fallow sabbaths keep,
Plump Ceres golden tresses wear,
And poppy top-knots deck her hair,
And silver streams through meadows stray,
And Naiads on the margin play,
And lesser nymphs on side of hills
From plaything urns pour down the rills.
 Thus shelter'd, free from care and strife,
May I enjoy a calm through life;
See faction, safe in low degree,
As men at land see storms at sea,
And laugh at miserable elves,
Not kind, so much as to themselves,
Curst with such souls of base alloy,
As can possess, but not enjoy;
Debar'd the pleasure to impart

By av'rice, sphincter[1] of the heart;
Who wealth, hard earn'd by guilty cares,
Bequeath untouch'd to thankless heirs.
May I, with look ungloom'd by guile,
And wearing Virtue's liv'ry-smile,
Prone the distressed to relieve,
And little trespasses forgive,
With income not in Fortune's pow'r,
And skill to make a busy hour,
With trips to town life to amuse,
To purchase books, and hear the news,
To see old friends, brush off the clown,
And quicken taste at coming down,
Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,
And slowly mellowing in age,
When Fate extends its gath'ring gripe,
Fall off like fruit grown fully ripe,
Quit a worn being without pain,
Perhaps to blossom soon again.
But now more serious see me grow,
And what I think, my Memmius, know.
Th' enthusiast's hope, and raptures wild,
Have never yet my reason foil'd.
His springy soul dilates like air,
When free from weight of ambient care,
And, hush'd in meditation deep,
Slides into dreams, as when asleep;
Then, fond of new discov'ries grown,
Proves a Columbus of her own,
Disdains the narrow bounds of place,
And through the wilds of endless space,
Borne up on metaphysic wings,
Chases light forms and shadowy things,
And, in the vague excursion caught,
Brings home some rare exotic thought:
The melancholy man such dreams,
As brightest evidence, esteems;
Fain would he see some distant scene
Suggested by his restless Spleen,

[1] Figuratively, for a contractile muscular ring by which an orifice of the body . . . is normally kept closed.—*N.E.D.*

And Fancy's telescope applies
With tinctur'd glass to cheat his eyes.
Such thoughts, as love the gloom of night,
I close examine by the light;
For who, though brib'd by gain to lie,
Dare sun-beam written truths deny,
And execute plain common sense
On faith's mere hearsay evidence?
That superstition mayn't create,
And club its ills with those of fate,
I many a notion take to task,
Made dreadful by its visor-mask:
Thus scruple, spasm of the mind,
Is cur'd, and certainty I find;
Since optic reason shews me plain,
I dreaded spectres of the brain;
And legendary fears are gone,
Though in tenacious childhood sown.
Thus in opinions I commence
Freeholder in the proper sense,
And neither suit nor service do,
Nor homage to pretenders show,
Who boast themselves by spurious roll
Lords of the manor of the soul;
Preferring sense, from chin that's bare,
To nonsense thron'd in whisker'd hair.
To thee, Creator uncreate,
O Entium Ens! divinely great!——
Hold, Muse, nor melting pinions try,
Nor near the blazing glory fly,
Nor straining break thy feeble bow,
Unfeather'd arrows far to throw:
Through fields unknown nor madly stray,
Where no ideas mark the way.
With tender eyes, and colours faint,
And trembling hands forbear to paint.
Who, features veil'd by light, can hit?
Where can, what has no outline, sit?
My soul, the vain attempt forego,
Thyself, the fitter subject, know.
He wisely shuns the bold extreme,

Who soon lays by th' unequal theme,
Nor runs, with wisdom's Sirens caught,
On quicksands swall'wing shipwreckt thought;
But, conscious of his distance, gives
Mute praise, and humble negatives.
In one, no object of our sight,
Immutable and infinite,
Who can't be cruel, or unjust,
Calm and resign'd, I fix my trust;
To him my past and present state
I owe, and must my future fate.
A stranger into life I'm come,
Dying may be our going home,
Transported here by angry Fate,
The convicts of a prior state:
Hence I no anxious thoughts bestow
On matters I can never know;
Through life's foul ways, like vagrant, pass'd,
He'll grant a settlement at last;
And with sweet ease the wearied crown,
By leave to lay his being down.
If doom'd to dance th' eternal round
Of life, no sooner lost but found,
And dissolution soon to come,
Like sponge, wipes out life's present sum,
But can't our state of pow'r bereave
An endless series to receive;
Then, if hard dealt with here by fate,
We balance in another state,
And consciousness must go along,
And sign th' acquittance for the wrong.
He for his creatures must decree
More happiness than misery,
Or be supposed to create,
Curious to try, what 'tis to hate,
And do an act, which rage infers,
'Cause lameness halts, or blindness errs.
Thus, thus I steer my bark, and sail
On even keel with gentle gale;
At helm I make my reason sit,
My crew of passions all submit.

If dark and blustring prove some nights,
Philosophy puts forth her lights;
Experience holds the cautious glass,
To shun the breakers, as I pass,
And frequent throws the wary lead,
To see what dangers may be hid:
And once in seven years I'm seen
At Bath or Tunbridge to careen,[1]
Though pleas'd to see the dolphins play,
I mind my compass and my way.
With store sufficient for relief,
And wisely still prepar'd to reef,
Nor wanting the dispersive bowl
Of cloudy weather in the soul,
I make (may heav'n propitious send
Such wind and weather to the end)
Neither becalm'd, nor over-blown,
Life's voyage to the world unknown.

(1737)

The Sparrow and Diamond

A Song

I

I LATELY saw, what now I sing,
Fair Lucia's hand display'd;
This finger grac'd a diamond ring,
On that a sparrow play'd.

II

The feather'd play-thing she caress'd,
She strok'd its head and wings;
And while it nestled on her breast,
She lisp'd the dearest things.

III

With chisel'd bill a spark ill-set
He loosen'd from the rest,

[1] A ship is careened when it is turned over on its side for repairs.

And swallow'd down to grind his meat,
The easier to digest.

IV

She seiz'd his bill with wild affright,
Her diamond to descry:
'Twas gone! she sicken'd at the sight,
Moaning her bird would die.

V

The tongue-ty'd knocker none might use,
The curtains none undraw,
The footmen went without their shoes,
The street was laid with straw.

VI

The doctor us'd his oily art
Of strong emetic kind,
Th' apothecary play'd his part,
And engineer'd behind.

VII

When physic ceas'd to spend its store,
To bring away the stone,
Dicky, like people given o'er,
Picks up, when let alone.

VIII

His eyes dispell'd their sickly dews,
He peck'd behind his wing;
Lucia recov'ring at the news,
Relapses for the ring.

IX

Meanwhile within her beauteous breast
Two different passions strove;
When av'rice ended the contest,
And triumph'd over love.

X

Poor little, pretty, fluttering thing,[1]
Thy pains the sex display,
Who only to repair a ring,
Could take thy life away.

XI

Drive av'rice from your breasts, ye fair,
Monster of foulest mien:
Ye would not let it harbour there,
Could but its form be seen.

XII

It made a virgin put on guile,
Truth's image break her word,
A Lucia's face forbear to smile,
A Venus kill her bird.

(Publ. 1738)

The Seeker

When I first came to London, I rambled about
From sermon to sermon, took a slice and went out.
Then on me, in divinity bachelor, try'd
Many priests to obtrude a Levitical bride;
And urging their various opinions, intended
To make me wed systems, which they recommended.
Said a lech'rous old friar skulking near Lincoln's-Inn,
(Whose trade's to absolve, but whose pastime's to sin;
Who, spider-like, seizes weak Protestant flies,
Which hung in his sophistry cobweb he spies;)
"Ah pity your soul, for without our church pale,
If you happen to die, to be damned you can't fail;
The Bible, you boast, is a wild revelation:
Hear a church that can't err if you hope for salvation."
Said a formal non-con,[2] (whose rich stock of grace
Lies forward expos'd in shop-window of face,)

[1] See Prior's "Dying Hadrian," p. 133. [2] non-conformist.

"Ah! pity your soul: come, be of our sect:
For then you are safe, and may plead you're elect.
As it stands in the Acts, we can prove ourselves saints,
Being Christ's little flock ev'rywhere spoke against."
Said a jolly church parson, (devoted to ease,
While penal-law dragons guard his golden fleece,)
"If you pity your soul, I pray listen to neither;
The first is in error, the last a deceiver:
That ours is the true church, the sense of our tribe is,
And surely *in medio tutissimus ibis.*"
Said a yea and nay friend with a stiff hat and band;
(Who while he talk'd gravely would hold forth his hand,)
"Dominion and wealth are the aim of all three,
Though about ways and means they may all disagree;
Then pr'ythee be wise, go the quakers' by-way,
'Tis plain, without turnpikes, so nothing to pay."

(Publ. 1738)

William Shenstone

1714–1763

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the son of a churchwarden of Halesowen, Worcestershire, was born on November 13, 1714. His first teacher was an old dame, Sarah Lloyd, the original of "The Schoolmistress" in the poem of that name. In 1732 he matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford, and was a contemporary there of Samuel Johnson. His "Poems on Various Occasions," privately printed at Oxford in 1737, contained the first draft of "The Schoolmistress." Shenstone took no degree, but kept his name on the rolls of the college until 1742. He published anonymously his "Judgment of Hercules" in 1741, and in the next year he brought out a revised edition of his "Schoolmistress," which he described as written at college, 1736, and which he now enlarged from twenty-eight to thirty-five stanzas. This poem and "The Choice of Hercules" were reprinted in the first and third volumes of Dodsley's *Collection*, and a "Pastoral Ballad" appeared in the fourth. The fifth volume contained verses written between 1730 and 1750. Shenstone spent his later years in beautifying Leasowes, which he inherited in 1745, so that it became, in Johnson's words, "a place to be visited by travellers and copied by designers." So elaborate was his work in this respect that he occupies an important place in the landscape gardening of the middle years of the century. He died on February 11, 1763, and was buried in Halesowen churchyard. His writings were collected by Dodsley in three volumes in 1764–69.

EDITIONS

Poetical Works of William Shenstone. Edited, with Life, etc., by G. Gilfillan. 1854.
Poetical Works. Edited by C. C. Clarke. 1880.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Hazeltine, Alice J.: "A Study of William Shenstone and of His Critics." 1918.
Purkis, E. Monro.: "William Shenstone, Poet and Landscape Gardener." 1931.

The Schoolmistress

Ah me! full sorely is my heart forlorn,
To think how modest worth neglected lies;
While partial fame doth with her blasts adorn
Such deeds alone, as pride and pomp disguise;
Deeds of ill sort, and mischievous emprize:
Lend me thy clarion, goddess! let me try
To sound the praise of merit, ere it dies;
Such as I oft have chaunced to espy,
Lost in the dreary shades of dull obscurity.

In ev'ry village mark'd with little spire,
Embow'r'd in trees, and hardly known to fame,
There dwells, in lowly shed, and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we schoolmistress name;
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame;
They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent,
Aw'd by the pow'r of this relentless dame;
And oft-times, on vagaries idly bent,
For unkempt hair, or talk unconn'd,[1] are sorely shent.[2]

And all in sight doth rise a birchen tree,
Which learning near her little dome did stowe;
Whilom a twig of small regard to see,
Though now so wide its waving branches flow;
And work the simple vassals mickle woe;
For not a wind might curl the leaves that blew,
But their limbs shudder'd, and their pulse beat low;
And, as they look'd, they found their horror grew,
And shap'd it into rods, and tingled at the view.

So have I seen (who has not, may conceive,)
A lifeless phantom near a garden plac'd;
So doth it wanton birds of peace bereave,
Of sport, of song, of pleasure, of repast;
They start, they stare, they wheel, they look aghast:
Sad servitude! such comfortless annoy
May no bold Briton's riper age e'er taste!

[1] unstudied; ignorant. [2] put to shame.

Ne superstition clog his dance of joy,
Ne vision empty, vain, his native bliss destroy.

Near to this dome is found a patch so green,
On which the tribe their gambols do display;
And at the door impris'ning board is seen,
Lest weakly wights of smaller size should stray;
Eager, perdie, to bask in sunny day!
The noises intermix'd, which thence resound,
Do learning's little tenement betray:
Where sits the dame, disguis'd in look profound,
And eyes her fairy throng, and turns her wheel around.

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,
Emblem right meet of decency does yield:
Her apron dy'd in grain, as blue, I trow,
As is the hare-bell that adorns the field:
And in her hand, for scepter, she does wield
Tway[1] birchen sprays; with anxious fear entwin'd,
With dark distrust, and sad repentance fill'd;
And steadfast hate, and sharp affliction join'd,
And fury uncontroll'd, and chastisement unkind.

Few have but ken'd, in semblance meet portray'd,
The childish faces, of old Eol's train;[2]
Libs, Notus, Auster:[3] these in frowns array'd,
How then would fare or earth, or sky, or main,
Were the stern god to give his slaves the rein?
And were not she rebellious breasts to quell,
And were not she her statutes to maintain,
The cot no more, I ween, were deem'd the cell,
Where comely peace of mind, and decent order dwell.

A russet stole was o'er her shoulders thrown;
A russet kirtle fenc'd the nipping air;
'T was simple russet, but it was her own;
'T was her own country bred the flock so fair;
'T was her own labour did the fleece prepare;
And, sooth to say, her pupils rang'd around,

[1] two. [2] Æolus, the ruler of the winds.
[3] all names for the southwest wind.

Through pious awe, did term it passing rare;
For they in gaping wonderment abound,
And think, no doubt, she been the greatest wight on ground.

Albeit ne flatt'ry did corrupt her truth,
Ne pompous title did debauch her ear;
Goody, good-woman, gossip, n'aunt, forsooth,
Or dame, the sole additions[1] she did hear;
Yet these she challeng'd, these she held right dear:
Ne would esteem him act as mought behove,
Who should not honour'd eld with these revere:
For never title yet so mean could prove,
But there was eke a mind which did that title love.

One ancient hen she took delight to feed,
The plodding pattern of the busy dame;
Which, ever and anon, impell'd by need,
Into her school, begirt with chickens, came;
Such favour did her past deportment claim:
And, if neglect had lavish'd on the ground
Fragment of bread, she would collect the same;
For well she knew, and quaintly could expound,
What sin it were to waste the smallest crumb she found. . . .

Right well she knew each temper to descry;
To thwart the proud, and the submiss to raise;
Some with vile copper prize exalt on high,
And some entice with pittance small of praise;
And other some with baleful sprig she 'frays:
Ev'n absent, she the reins of pow'r doth hold,
While with quaint arts the giddy crowd she sways;
Forewarn'd, if little bird their pranks behold,
'T will whisper in her ear, and all the scene unfold.

Lo now with state she utters the command!
Eftsoons the urchins to their tasks repair;
Their books of stature small they take in hand,
Which with pellucid horn secured are,[2]
So save from finger wet the letters fair:
The work so gay, that on their back is seen,

[1] titles. [2] protected by transparent horn; horn-books.

St. George's high achievements does declare;
On which thilk wight that has y-gazing been,
Kens the forth-coming rod, unpleasing sight, I ween!

Ah luckless he, and born beneath the beam
Of evil star! it irks me whilst I write!
As erst the bard[1] by Mulla's silver stream,
Oft, as he told of deadly dolorous plight,
Sigh'd as he sung, and did in tears indite.
For brandishing the rod, she doth begin
To loose the brogues,[2] the stripling's late delight!
And down they drop; appears his dainty skin,
Fair as the furry coat of whitest ermilin.[3]

O ruthful scene! when from a nook obscure,
His little sister doth his peril see:
All playful as she sate, she grows demure;
She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee;
She meditates a pray'r to set him free:
Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny,
(If gentle pardon could with dames agree)
To her sad grief that swells in either eye,
And wrings her so that all for pity she could die.

No longer can she now her shrieks command;
And hardly she forbears, through awful fear,
To rushen forth, and, with presumptuous hand,
To stay harsh justice in its mid career.
On thee she calls, on thee her parent dear!
(Ah! too remote to ward the shameful blow!)
She sees no kind domestic visage near,
And soon a flood of tears begins to flow;
And gives a loose at last to unavailing woe.

But ah! what pen his piteous plight may trace?
Or what device his loud laments explain?
The form uncouth of his disguised face?
The pallid hue that dyes his looks amain?
The plenteous show'r that does his cheek distain?

[1] Edmund Spenser, whose home in Ireland was near the Mulla River.
[2] breeches. [3] ermine.

When he, in abject wise, implores the dame,
Ne hopeth aught of sweet reprieve to gain;
Or when from high she levels well her aim,
And, through the thatch, his cries each falling stroke proclaim.

The other tribe, aghast, with sore dismay,
Attend, and conn their tasks with mickle care:
By turns, astony'd, ev'ry twig survey,
And, from their fellow's hateful wounds, beware;
Knowing, I wist, how each the same may share;
Till fear has taught them a performance meet,
And to the well-known chest the dame repair;
Whence oft with sugar'd cates she doth 'em greet,
And ginger-bread y-rare; now, certes, doubly sweet!

See to their seats they hye with merry glee,
And in beseemly order sitten there;
All but the wight of bum y-galled, he
Abhorreth bench and stool, and form,[1] and chair;
(This hand in mouth y-fix'd, that rends his hair;)
And eke with snubs profound, and heaving breast,
Convulsions intermitting! does declare
His grievous wrong; his dame's unjust behest;
And scorns her offer'd love, and shuns to be caress'd. . . .

Enjoy, poor imps! enjoy your sportive trade;
And chase gay flies, and cull the fairest flow'rs;
For when my bones in grass-green sods are laid;
For never may ye taste more careless hours
In knightly castles, or in ladies' bow'rs.
O vain to seek delight in earthly thing!
But most in courts where proud ambition tow'rs;
Deluded wight! who weens fair peace can spring
Beneath the pompous dome of kesar[2] or of king.

See in each sprite some various bent appear!
These rudely carol most incondite lay;
Those saunt'ring on the green, with jocund leer
Salute the stranger passing on his way;
Some builden fragile tenements of clay;

[1] a long seat without a back. [2] kaiser; emperor.

Some to the standing lake their courses bend,
With pebbles smooth at duck and drake to play;
Thilk[1] to the huxter's sav'ry cottage tend,
In pastry kings and queens th' allotted mite to spend.

Here, as each season yields a different store,
Each season's stores in order ranged been;
Apples with cabbage-net y-cover'd o'er,
Galling full sore th' unmoney'd wight, are seen;
And goose-b'rie clad in liv'ry red or green;
And here of lovely dye, the cath'rine pear,
Fine pear! as lovely for thy juice, I ween:
O may no wight e'er pennyless come there,
Lest smit with ardent love he pine with hopeless care! . . .

(1736)

The Landskip

A Song

How pleas'd within my native bowers
Erewhile I pass'd the day!
Was ever scene so deck'd with flowers?
Were ever flowers so gay?

How sweetly smil'd the hill, the vale,
And all the landskip round!
The river gliding down the dale!
The hill with beeches crown'd!

But now, when urg'd by tender woes
I speed to meet my dear,
That hill and stream my zeal oppose,
And check my fond career.

No more, since Daphne was my theme,
Their wonted charms I see:
That verdant hill, and silver stream,
Divide my love and me.

(1737–43)

[1] this same.

Hope

A Pastoral Ballad

My banks they are furnish'd with bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep;
My grottos are shaded with trees,
And my hills are white-over with sheep.
I seldom have met with a loss,
Such health do my fountains bestow;
My fountains all border'd with moss,
Where the hare-bells and violets grow.

Not a pine in my grove is there seen,
But with tendrils of woodbine is bound:
Not a beech's more beautiful green,
But a sweet-briar entwines it around.
Not my fields, in the prime of the year,
More charms than my cattle unfold;
Not a brook that is limpid and clear,
But it glitters with fishes of gold.

One would think she might like to retire
To the bow'r I have labour'd to rear;
Not a shrub that I heard her admire,
But I hasted and planted it there.
Oh how sudden the jessamine strove
With the lilac to render it gay!
Already it calls for my love,
To prune the wild branches away.

From the plains, from the woodlands and groves,
What strains of wild melody flow!
How the nightingales warble their loves
From thickets of roses that blow!
And when her bright form shall appear,
Each bird shall harmoniously join
In a concert so soft and so clear,
As—she may not be fond to resign.

I have found out a gift for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:

But let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed.
For he ne'er could be true, she aver'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young:
And I lov'd her the more, when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

I have heard her with sweetness unfold
How that pity was due to—a dove:
That it ever attended the bold,
And she call'd it the sister of love.
But her words such a pleasure convey,
So much I her accents adore,
Let her speak, and whatever she say,
Methinks I should love her the more.

Can a bosom so gentle remain
Unmov'd, when her Corydon sighs!
Will a nymph that is fond of the plain,
These plains and this valley despise?
Dear regions of silence and shade!
Soft scenes of contentment and ease!
Where I could have pleasingly stray'd,
If aught, in her absence, could please.

But where does my Phyllida stray?
And where are her grots and her bow'rs?
Are the groves and the valleys as gay,
And the shepherds as gentle as ours?
The groves may perhaps be as fair,
And the face of the valleys as fine;
The swains may in manners compare,
But their love is not equal to mine.

(1743)

Elegy

HE COMPLAINS HOW SOON THE PLEASING NOVELTY OF LIFE IS OVER

To Mr. J——

Ah me, my friend! it will not, will not last!
This fairy-scene, that cheats our youthful eyes!
The charm dissolves; th' aerial music's past;
The banquet ceases, and the vision flies.

Where are the splendid forms, the rich perfumes,
Where the gay tapers, where the specious dome?
Vanish'd the costly pearls, the crimson plumes,
And we, delightless, left to wander home!

Vain now are books, the sage's wisdom vain!
What has the world to bribe our steps astray?
Ere reason learns by study'd laws to reign,
The weaken'd passions, self-subdued, obey.

Scarce has the sun sev'n annual courses roll'd,
Scarce shown the whole that fortune can supply;
Since, not the miser so caress'd his gold,
As I, for what it gave, was heard to sigh.

On the world's stage I wish'd some sprightly part;
To deck my native fleece with tawdry lace;
'Twas life, 'twas taste, and—oh my foolish heart!
Substantial joy was fix'd in pow'r and place.

And you, ye works of art! allur'd mine eye,
The breathing picture, and the living stone:
"Tho' gold, tho' splendour, heav'n and fate deny,
Yet might I call one Titian stroke my own!"

Smit with the charms of fame, whose lovely spoil,
The wreath, the garland, fire the poet's pride,
I trim'd my lamp, consum'd the midnight oil—
But soon the paths of health and fame divide!

Oft too I pray'd, 'twas nature form'd the pray'r,
To grace my native scenes, my rural home;
To see my trees express their planter's care,
And gay, on Attic models, raise my dome.

But now 'tis o'er, the dear delusion's o'er!
A stagnant breezeless air becalms my soul:
A fond aspiring candidate no more,
I scorn the palm, before I reach the goal.

O youth! enchanting state, profusely blest!
Bliss ev'n obtrusive courts the frolic mind;
Of health neglectful, yet by health carest;
Careless of favour, yet secure to find.

Then glows the breast, as op'ning roses fair;
More free, more vivid than the linnet's wing;
Honest as light, transparent ev'n as air,
Tender as buds, and lavish as the spring.

Not all the force of manhood's active might,
Not all the craft to subtle age assign'd,
Not science shall extort that dear delight,
Which gay delusion gave the tender mind.

Adieu soft raptures! transports void of care!
Parent of raptures, dear deceit, adieu!
And you, her daughters, pining with despair,
Why, why so soon her fleeting steps pursue!

Tedious again to curse the drizzling day!
Again to trace the wintry tracts of snow!
Or, sooth'd by vernal airs, again survey
The self-same hawthorns bud, and cowslips blow!

O life! how soon of ev'ry bliss forlorn!
We start false joys, and urge the devious race:
A tender prey; that cheers our youthful morn,
Then sinks untimely, and defrauds the chace.

(c. 1748)

Written at an Inn at Henley

To THEE, fair freedom! I retire
From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
Than the low cot, or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless pow'r I reign;
And ev'ry health which I begin,
Converts dull port to bright champagne;
Such freedom crowns it, at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
I fly from falsehood's specious grin!
Freedom I love, and form I hate,
And choose my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter! take my sordid ore,
Which lacqueys else might hope to win;
It buys, what courts have not in store;
It buys me freedom, at an inn.

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome, at an inn.

(1751)

Joseph Warton

1722–1800

JOSEPH WARTON, the son of Thomas Warton the elder, was born at Dunsfold, Surrey, and was baptized on April 22, 1722. In 1735 he was elected scholar of Winchester College, where he became a friend of Collins. His first poem appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1739. The following year he matriculated at Oriel College, Oxford, and in 1744 he took his B.A. degree. In the latter year his first volume of verse, which included a long poem in blank verse, "The Enthusiast, or the Lover of Nature," had the honor of Gray's approval. His "Odes on Various Subjects" (1746) were more successful than his friend Collins's, published at the same time. Through the patronage of the rascally Duke of Bolton, he was made rector of Winslade in 1748. He brought out a new edition of Vergil's "Works," in both Latin and English (1753), the translation of the "Eclogues" and the "Georgics" being his own, and that of the "Æneid" being Pitt's. The same year he began contributing to *The Adventurer*, at Johnson's request, and continued doing so for three years. In 1754 he became rector of Tunworth, and was the next year appointed second master of Winchester College. The first part of his "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope" came out in 1756, and the second in 1782. He was made headmaster of Winchester in 1766, a position he unsuccessfully administered for thirty-eight years. Oxford made him B.D. and D.D. in 1768. In 1773 he was elected a member of the Literary Club, even though (or, perhaps, because) he dared to dispute Johnson: Johnson told him he was not used to contradiction, and Warton retorted it would be better if he were. From 1783 to 1790 he had livings in Wickham and Upham in Hampshire. In 1793 he at last retired from Winchester and settled in Wickham. Here he completed in 1797 an edition of Pope's "Works" in nine volumes. He died on February 23, 1800, and was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

EDITION

The Three Wartons: A Choice of their Verse. Edited, with a Note and a Select Bibliography, by Eric Partridge. 1927.

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The Enthusiast

Or the Lover of Nature

Ye green-rob'd Dryads, oft at dusky eve
By wondering shepherds seen, to forests brown,
To unfrequented meads, and pathless wilds,
Lead me from gardens deck'd with art's vain pomps.
Can gilt alcoves, can marble-mimic gods,
Parterres embroider'd, obelisks, and urns,
Of high relief; can the long, spreading lake
Or vista lessening to the sight; can Stow,
With all her Attic fanes, such raptures raise,
As the thrush-haunted copse, where lightly leaps
The fearful fawn the rustling leaves along,
And the brisk squirrel sports from bough to bough,
While from an hollow oak, whose naked roots
O'erhang a pensive rill, the busy bees
Hum drowsy lullabies? The bards of old,
Fair Nature's friends, sought such retreats, to charm
Sweet Echo with their songs; oft too they met
In summer evenings, near sequester'd bow'rs,
Or mountain-nymph, or muse, and eager learnt
The moral strains she taught to mend mankind.
As to a secret grot Ægeria stole
With patriot Numa,[1] and in silent night
Whisper'd him sacred laws, he list'ning sat,
Rapt with her virtuous voice, old Tiber lean'd
Attentive on his urn, and hush'd his waves.

[1] Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, was instructed by the nymph Egeria, who visited him in a grove and honored him with her love.

Rich in her weeping country's spoils, Versailles
May boast a thousand fountains, that can cast
The tortur'd waters to the distant heav'ns;
Yet let me choose some pine-topt precipice
Abrupt and shaggy, whence a foamy stream,
Like Anio,[1] tumbling roars; or some bleak heath,
Where straggling stands the mournful juniper,
Or yew-tree scath'd; while in clear prospect round,
From the grove's bosom spires emerge, and smoke
In bluish wreaths ascends, ripe harvests wave,
Low, lonely cottages, and ruin'd tops
Of Gothic battlements appear, and streams
Beneath the sun-beams twinkle.—The shrill lark,
That wakes the woodman to his early task,
Or love-sick Philomel, whose luscious lays
Soothe lone night-wanderers, the moaning dove
Pitied by list'ning milk-maid, far excel
The deep-mouth'd viol, the soul-lulling lute,
And battle-breathing trumpet. Artful sounds!
That please not like the choristers of air,
When first they hail th' approach of laughing May.
Can Kent design like Nature? Mark where Thames
Plenty and pleasure pours through Lincoln's meads;[2]
Can the great artist, though with taste supreme
Endu'd, one beauty to this Eden add?
Though he, by rules unfetter'd, boldly scorns
Formality and method, round and square
Disdaining, plans irregularly great.
Creative Titian, can thy vivid strokes,
Or thine, O graceful Raphael, dare to vie
With the rich tints that paint the breathing mead?
The thousand-colour'd tulip, violet's bell
Snow-clad and meek, the vermil-tinctur'd rose,
And golden crocus?—Yet with these the maid,
Phillis or Phœbe at a feast or wake,
Her jetty locks enamels; fairer she,
In innocence and homespun vestments dress'd,
Than if cerulean sapphires at her ears

[1] The river Anio forms at Tibur beautiful falls, and flows into the Tiber three miles above Rome.
[2] The Earl of Lincoln's terrace, at Weybridge in Surrey.—*Partridge.*

Shone pendant, or a precious diamond-cross
Heav'd gently on her panting bosom white.
 Yon shepherd idly stretch'd on the rude rock,
List'ning to dashing waves, and sea-mew's clang
High-hovering o'er his head, who views beneath
The dolphin dancing o'er the level brine,
Feels more true bliss than the proud admiral,
Amid his vessels bright with burnish'd gold
And silken streamers, though his lordly nod
Ten thousand war-worn mariners revere.
And great Æneas gaz'd with more delight
On the rough mountain shagg'd with horrid shades,
(Where cloud-compelling Jove, as fancy dream'd,
Descending, shook his direful ægis[1] black)
Than if he enter'd the high Capitol
On golden columns rear'd, a conquer'd world
Exhausted, to enrich its stately head.
More pleas'd he slept in poor Evander's cot
On shaggy skins, lull'd by sweet nightingales,
Than if a Nero, in an age refin'd,
Beneath a gorgeous canopy had plac'd
His royal guest, and bade his minstrels sound
Soft slumb'rous Lydian airs, to sooth his rest.
 Happy the first of men, ere yet confin'd
To smoky cities; who in sheltering groves,
Warm caves, and deep-sunk valleys liv'd and lov'd,
By cares unwounded; what the sun and showers,
And genial earth untillag'd, could produce,
They gather'd grateful, or the acorn brown,
Or blushing berry; by the liquid lapse
Of murm'ring waters call'd to slake their thirst,
Or with fair nymphs their sun-brown limbs to bathe;
With nymphs who fondly clasp'd their fav'rite youths,
Unaw'd by shame, beneath the beechen shade,
Nor wiles, nor artificial coyness knew.
Then doors and walls were not; the melting maid
Nor frown of parents fear'd, nor husband's threats;
Nor had curs'd gold their tender hearts allur'd:
Then beauty was not venal. Injur'd Love,
O! whither, god of raptures, art thou fled?

[1] the shield of Jupiter.

While Avarice waves his golden wand around,
Abhorr'd magician, and his costly cup
Prepares with baneful drugs, t' enchant the souls
Of each low-thoughted fair to wed for gain.
 In Earth's first infancy (as sung the bard[1]
Who strongly painted what he boldly thought),
Though the fierce north oft smote with iron whip
Their shiv'ring limbs, though oft the bristly boar
Or hungry lion woke them with their howls,
And scar'd them from their moss-grown caves, to rove
Houseless and cold in dark tempestuous nights;
Yet were not myriads in embattl'd fields
Swept off at once, nor had the raging seas
O'erwhelm'd the found'ring bark and shrieking crew;
In vain the glassy ocean smil'd to tempt
The jolly sailor, unsuspecting harm,
For Commerce ne'er had spread her swelling sails,
Nor had the wond'ring Nereids ever heard
The dashing oar: then famine, want, and pine,
Sunk to the grave their fainting limbs; but us,
Diseaseful dainties, riot, and excess,
And feverish luxury destroy. In brakes,
Or marshes wild unknowingly they cropp'd
Herbs of malignant juice; to realms remote
While we for powerful poisons madly roam;
From every noxious herb collecting death.
What though unknown to those primeval sires
The well-arch'd dome, peopled with breathing forms
By fair Italia's skilful hand, unknown
The shapely column, and the crumbling busts
Of awful ancestors in long descent?
Yet why should man mistaken, deem it nobler
To dwell in palaces, and high-roof'd halls,
Than in God's forests, architect supreme!
Say, is the Persian carpet, than the field's
Or meadow's mantle gay, more richly wov'n;
Or softer to the votaries of ease
Than bladed grass, perfum'd with dewdropt flow'rs?
O taste corrupt! that luxury and pomp,
In specious names of polish'd manners veil'd,

[1] Lucretius.

Should proudly banish Nature's simple charms!
All beauteous Nature! by thy boundless charms
Oppress'd, O where shall I begin thy praise,
Where turn th' ecstatic eye, how ease my breast
That pants with wild astonishment and love!
Dark forests, and the op'ning lawn, refresh'd
With ever-gushing brooks, hill, meadow, dale,
The balmy bean-field, the gay-clover'd close,
So sweetly interchang'd, the lowing ox,
The playful lamb, the distant water-fall
Now faintly heard, now swelling with the breeze,
The sound of pastoral reed from hazel-bower,
The choral birds, the neighing steed, that snuffs
His dappled mate, stung with intense desire,
The ripen'd orchard when the ruddy orbs
Betwixt the green leaves blush, the azure skies,
The cheerful sun that through earth's vitals pours
Delight and health and heat; all, all conspire,
To raise, to soothe, to harmonize the mind,
To lift on wings of praise, to the great Sire
Of being and of beauty, at whose nod
Creation started from the gloomy vault
Of dreary Chaos, while the grisly king
Murmur'd to feel his boisterous power confin'd.
 What are the lays of artful Addison,
Coldly correct, to Shakespear's warblings wild?
Whom on the winding Avon's willow'd banks
Fair Fancy found, and bore the smiling babe
To a close cavern: (still the shepherds show
The sacred place, whence with religious awe
They hear, returning from the field at eve,
Strange whisp'rings of sweet music through the air)
Here, as with honey gather'd from the rock,
She fed the little prattler, and with songs
Oft sooth'd his wond'ring ears, with deep delight
On her soft lap he sat, and caught the sounds.
 Oft near some crowded city would I walk,
Listening the far-off noises, rattling cars,
Loud shouts of joy, sad shrieks of sorrow, knells
Full slowly tolling, instruments of trade,
Striking mine ears with one deep-swelling hum.

Or wand'ring near the sea, attend the sounds
Of hollow winds, and ever-beating waves.
Ev'n when wild tempests swallow up the plains,
And Boreas' blasts, big hail, and rains combine
To shake the groves and mountains, would I sit,
Pensively musing on th' outrageous crimes
That wake Heav'n's vengeance: at such solemn hours,
Demons and goblins through the dark air shriek,
While Hecat,[1] with her black-brow'd sisters nine,
Rides o'er the earth, and scatters woes and death.
Then too, they say, in drear Egyptian wilds
The lion and the tiger prowl for prey
With roarings loud! the list'ning traveller
Starts fear-struck, while the hollow echoing vaults
Of pyramids increase the deathful sounds.
But let me never fail in cloudless nights,
When silent Cynthia in her silver car
Through the blue concave slides, when shine the hills,
Twinkle the streams, and woods look tip'd with gold,
To seek some level mead, and there invoke
Old Midnight's sister, Contemplation sage,
(Queen of the rugged brow, and stern-fixt eye)
To lift my soul above this little earth,
This folly-fetter'd world: to purge my ears,
That I may hear the rolling planets' song,
And tuneful turning spheres: if this be barr'd,
The little Fays that dance in neighbouring dales,
Sipping the night-dew, while they laugh and love,
Shall charm me with aërial notes.—As thus
I wander musing, lo, what awful forms
Yonder appear! sharp-ey'd Philosophy
Clad in dun robes, an eagle on his wrist,
First meets my eye; next, virgin Solitude
Serene, who blushes at each gazer's sight;
Then Wisdom's hoary head, with crutch in hand,
Trembling, and bent with age; last, Virtue's self,
Smiling, in white array'd, who with her leads
Sweet Innocence, that prattles by her side,
A naked boy!—Harass'd with fear I stop,

[1] Hecate, the mistress of the witches, in "Macbeth" three in number, here nine.

I gaze, when Virtue thus—"Whoe'er thou art,
Mortal, by whom I deign to be beheld
In these my midnight-walks; depart, and say
That henceforth I and my immortal train
Forsake Britannia's isle; who fondly stoops
To Vice, her favourite paramour."—She spoke,
And as she turn'd, her round and rosy neck,
Her flowing train, and long ambrosial hair,
Breathing rich odours, I enamour'd view.
O who will bear me then to western climes,
(Since Virtue leaves our wretched land) to fields
Yet unpolluted with Iberian[1] swords:
The isles of Innocence, from mortal view
Deeply retir'd, beneath a plantane's shade,
Where Happiness and Quiet sit enthron'd,
With simple Indian swains, that I may hunt
The boar and tiger through savannahs[2] wild,
Through fragrant deserts, and through citron groves?
There, fed on dates and herbs, would I despise
The far-fetch'd cates of luxury, and hoards
Of narrow-hearted avarice; nor heed
The distant din of the tumultuous world.
So when rude whirlwinds rouse the roaring main,
Beneath fair Thetis[3] sits, in coral caves,
Serenely gay, nor sinking sailors' cries
Disturb her sportive nymphs, who round her form
The light fantastic dance, or for her hair
Weave rosy crowns, or with according lutes
Grace the soft warbles of her honied voice.

(1740)

Ode to Fancy

O PARENT of each lovely Muse,
Thy spirit o'er my soul diffuse,
O'er all my artless songs preside,
My footsteps to thy temple guide,

[1] Spanish, with a reference to the cruelties of the Spaniards in America.
[2] meadows with few or no trees.
[3] The goddess of the sea, who dwelt with her father Nereus and the Nereids beneath the waves.

To offer at thy turf-built shrine,
In golden cups no costly wine.
No murder'd fatling of the flock,
But flowers and honey from the rock.
O nymph with loosely-flowing hair,
With buskin'd[1] leg, and bosom bare,
Thy waist with myrtle-girdle bound,
Thy brows with Indian feathers crown'd,
Waving in thy snowy hand
An all-commanding magic wand,
Of pow'r to bid fresh gardens blow,
'Mid cheerless Lapland's barren snow,
Whose rapid wings thy flight convey
Thro' air, and over earth and sea,
While the vast, various landscape lies
Conspicuous to thy piercing eyes.
O lover of the desert, hail!
Say, in what deep and pathless vale,
Or on what hoary mountain's side,
'Mid fall of waters, you reside,
'Mid broken rocks, a rugged scene,
With green and grassy dales between,
'Mid forests dark of aged oak,
Ne'er echoing with the woodman's stroke,
Where never human art appear'd,
Nor ev'n one straw-roof'd cot was rear'd,
Where Nature seems to sit alone,
Majestic on a craggy throne;
Tell me the path, sweet wand'rer, tell,
To thy unknown sequester'd cell,
Where woodbines cluster round the door,
Where shells and moss o'erlay the floor,
And on whose top an hawthorn blows,
Amid whose thickly-woven boughs
Some nightingale still builds her nest,
Each evening warbling thee to rest:
Then lay me by the haunted stream,
Rapt in some wild, poetic dream,
In converse while methinks I rove
With Spenser through a fairy grove;

[1] Clad in a buskin or high shoe.

Till, suddenly awoke, I hear
Strange whisper'd music in my ear,
And my glad soul in bliss is drown'd
By the sweetly-soothing sound!
Me, goddess, by thy right hand lead
Sometimes through the yellow mead,
Where Joy and white-rob'd Peace resort,
And Venus keeps her festive court,
Where Mirth and Youth each evening meet,
And lightly trip with nimble feet,
Nodding their lily-crowned heads,
Where Laughter rose-lip'd Hebe[1] leads;
Where Echo walks steep hills among,
List'ning to the shepherd's song:
Yet not these flowery fields of joy
Can long my pensive mind employ,
Haste, Fancy, from the scenes of folly,
To meet the matron Melancholy!
Goddess of the tearful eye,
That loves to fold her arms, and sigh!
Let us with silent footsteps go
To charnels and the house of woe,
To Gothic churches, vaults, and tombs,
Where each sad night some virgin comes,
With throbbing breast, and faded cheek,
Her promis'd bridegroom's urn to seek;
Or to some abbey's mould'ring tow'rs,
Where, to avoid cold wintry show'rs,
The naked beggar shivering lies,
While whistling tempests round her rise,
And trembles lest the tottering wall
Should on her sleeping infants fall.
 Now let us louder strike the lyre,
For my heart glows with martial fire,
I feel, I feel, with sudden heat,
My big tumultuous bosom beat;
The trumpet's clangours pierce my ear,
A thousand widows' shrieks I hear,
Give me another horse, I cry,
Lo! the base Gallic squadrons fly;

[1] the goddess of eternal youth.

Whence is this rage?—what spirit, say,
To battle hurries me away?
'Tis Fancy, in her fiery car,
Transports me to the thickest war,
There whirls me o'er the hills of slain,
Where Tumult and Destruction reign;
Where, mad with pain, the wounded steed
Tramples the dying and the dead;
Where giant Terror stalks around,
With sullen joy surveys the ground,
And, pointing to th' ensanguin'd field,
Shakes his dreadful Gorgon-shield!
O guide me from this horrid scene,
To high-arch'd walks and alleys green,
Which lovely Laura seeks, to shun
The fervours of the mid-day sun;
The pangs of absence, O remove!
For thou canst place me near my love,
Canst fold in visionary bliss,
And let me think I steal a kiss,
While her ruby lips dispense
Luscious nectar's quintessence!
When young-ey'd Spring profusely throws
From her green lap the pink and rose,
When the soft turtle of the dale
To Summer tells her tender tale,
When Autumn cooling caverns seeks,
And stains with wine his jolly cheeks;
When Winter, like poor pilgrim old,
Shakes his silver beard with cold;
At every season let my ear
Thy solemn whispers, Fancy, hear.
O warm, enthusiastic maid,
Without thy powerful, vital aid,
That breathes an energy divine,
That gives a soul to every line,
Ne'er may I strive with lips profane
To utter an unhallow'd strain,
Nor dare to touch the sacred string,
Save when with smiles thou bid'st me sing.
O hear our prayer, O hither come

From thy lamented Shakespear's tomb,
On which thou lov'st to sit at eve,
Musing o'er thy darling's grave;
O queen of numbers, once again
Animate some chosen swain,
Who, fill'd with unexhausted fire,
May boldly smite the sounding lyre,
Who with some new, unequall'd song,
May rise above the rhyming throng,
O'er all our list'ning passions reign,
O'erwhelm our souls with joy and pain:
With terror shake, with pity move,
Rouse with revenge, or melt with love.
O deign t' attend his evening walk,
With him in groves and grottos talk;
Teach him to scorn with frigid art
Feebly to touch th' unraptur'd heart;
Like lightning, let his mighty verse
The bosom's inmost foldings pierce;
With native beauties win applause,
Beyond cold critics' studied laws;
O let each Muse's fame increase,
O bid Britannia rival Greece.

(1746)

Ode to Evening

HAIL, meek-ey'd maiden, clad in sober grey,
Whose soft approach the weary woodman loves,
As, homeward bent to kiss his prattling babes,
He jocund whistles through the twilight groves.

When Phœbus sinks beneath the gilded hills,
You lightly o'er the misty meadows walk,
The drooping daisies bathe in dulcet dews,
And nurse the nodding violet's slender stalk.

The panting Dryads,[1] that in day's fierce heat
To inmost bowers and cooling caverns ran,

[1] wood-nymphs.

Return to trip in wanton evening dance,
Old Sylvan too returns, and laughing Pan.[1]

To the deep woods the clamorous rooks repair,
Light skims the swallow o'er the wat'ry scene,
And from the sheep-cotes, and fresh-furrow'd field,
Stout plowmen meet to wrestle on the green.

The swain that artless sings on yonder rock,
His nibbling sheep and length'ning shadow spies,
Pleas'd with the cool, the calm, refreshful hour,
And with hoarse hummings of unnumber'd flies.

Now every passion sleeps; desponding Love,
And pining Envy, ever-restless Pride;
An holy calm creeps o'er my peaceful soul,
Anger and mad Ambition's storms subside.

O modest Evening, oft let me appear
A wandering votary in thy pensive train,
List'ning to every wildly-warbling throat
That fills with farewell notes the dark'ning plain.

(1749)

Ode to Solitude

THOU, that at deep dead of night
Walk'st forth beneath the pale moon's light,
In robe of flowing black array'd,
While cypress-leaves thy brows o'ershade;
List'ning to the crowing cock,
And the distant sounding clock;
Or, sitting in the cavern low,
Dost hear the bleak winds loudly blow,
Or the hoarse death-boding owl,
Or village mastiff's wakeful howl,
While through thy melancholy room
A dim lamp lights an awful gloom;

[1] Silvanus was the god of the fields and forests, sometimes identified with Pan, the god of flowers and shepherds.

Thou, that on the meadow green
Or daisy'd upland art not seen,
But wand'ring by the dusky nooks,
And the pensive falling brooks,
Or near some rugged, herbless rock,
Where no shepherd keeps his flock!
Musing maid, to thee I come,
Hating the tradeful city's hum;
O let me calmly dwell with thee,
From noisy mirth and bus'ness free,
With meditation seek the skies,
This folly-fetter'd world despise!

(1746)

Thomas Gray

1716–1771

THOMAS GRAY, the son of a brutal and probably insane father, was born in Cornhill, London, on December 26, 1716. About 1727 he entered Eton, where he made the acquaintance of Richard West and Horace Walpole. In 1734 he was admitted to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and after characterizing the university as "a joy of wild asses," he left it in 1738 without taking his degree. In 1739 he accompanied Horace Walpole on a tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy, but in 1741 he quarreled with his companion and proceeded alone, reaching London in September of that year. On the fortunate death of his father in November, he settled at Stoke Poges with his mother. In June of the following year, his dear friend West died, in whose memory Gray wrote his well-known sonnet. The same year he produced his "Ode to Spring," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and the "Hymn to Adversity." On returning to Peterhouse as a fellow commoner, he studied enough law to qualify him for an LL.B. in 1744. His next poem was the "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat," which he wrote in 1747. Three years later he completed his much-revised "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." From 1754 to 1757 he was working in a leisurely manner on his Pindaric odes: "The Progress of Poesy" was completed in 1754 and "The Bard" in 1757. He moved from Peterhouse to Pembroke Hall in 1756, because his complaint against certain young men of fortune, who played some tricks on him, was not heeded by the Master of Peterhouse. The next year he was offered, but declined, the poet laureateship. In 1759 he took lodgings near the British Museum, which had just been opened to the public. He wrote "The Fatal Sisters" and the Norse odes in 1761, the year of his return to Cambridge. In 1768 he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History, an honorary position requiring no lectures. The next year he made a tour of the Lake country. His letters, which in interest rank almost with his poems, reveal his great learning, his romantic attitude toward nature, and his sound critical ability. He died on July 30, 1771, and was buried in the churchyard of Stoke Poges.

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Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy shade;[1]

[1] King Henry the Sixth, Founder of the college [1440].—*Gray.*

And ye[1] that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below
 Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
 His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
 Ah fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
 A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
 As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
 To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
 Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
 The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
 The captive linnet which enthrall?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
 Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
 Their murm'ring labours ply,
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
 To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
 And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
 And snatch a fearful joy.

[1] the towers of Windsor Castle, nearly opposite the College.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
 Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
 The sunshine of the breast,
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new,
 And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
 That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
 The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
 Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,

And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings; all are men,
Condemn'd alike to groan,
The tender for another's pain;
Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah, why should they know their fate?
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies.
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'T is folly to be wise.

(1742)

Sonnet on the Death of Richard West[1]

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require.
My lonely anguish melts no heart, but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:

[1] West died June 1, 1742. The sonnet was written the following August.

To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

(1742)

Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat

Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gaz'd: but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue[1]
Through richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,

[1] The dye was made by the ancient Tyrians from the juice of a shellfish, a gorgeous color between purple and crimson.

Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smil'd)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguil'd,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry watry god,
Some speedy aid to send.
No dolphin[1] came, no Nereid[2] stirr'd,
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
A fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties, undeceiv'd,
Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

(1748)

Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting[3] day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

[1] A dolphin carried Orion to shore on its back when he was forced to leap overboard, so charmed had it been by his music.
[2] a sea-nymph. [3] departing.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.[1]

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.[2]
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke[3] the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

[1] the bed on which they actually slept when alive.
[2] "hour" is the subject of "awaits." [3] call forth (Latin: *provocare*).

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,[1]
And froze the genial[2] current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden,[3] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;

[1] enthusiasm. [2] cheering, enlivening, inspiriting.—*N.E.D.*
[3] John Hampden, who resisted Charles I's attempt to collect his illegal ship-money tax. In the Mason MS the persons mentioned in this stanza were Cato, Tully, and Cæsar.

Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still[1] erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their names, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance,[2] by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.[3]

"There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,

[1] always. [2] perchance. [3] a grass-covered field.

Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."[1]

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear:
He gained from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

(c. 1742–50)

[1] The following stanza Gray omitted because he thought it "too long a parenthesis in this place":

"There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are frequent vi'lets found;
The robin loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

The Progress of Poesy

I

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's[1] harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres'[2] golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks, and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell![3] the sullen Cares,
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War,[4]
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And drop'd his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king[5]
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's[6] velvet-green

[1] Helicon was a mountain range in Bœotia, believed by the Greeks to be the abode of the Muses.
[2] Ceres, the goddess of agriculture.
[3] According to the myth, the lyre was originally made by stretching strings across the tortoise shell.
[4] Because of their warlike character, the Thracians worshipped Mars in particular.
[5] the eagle.
[6] Idalium was a town in Cyprus where there was a special altar erected to the worship of Venus.

The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's[1] day
With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.

II

Man's feeble race what ills await!
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky:
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's[2] march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shiv'ring native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the od'rous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat
In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.

[1] Venus is supposed to have landed on the island of Cythera when she was born of the sea.
[2] the march of the sun.

Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,[1]
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,[2]
Fields, that cool Ilissus[3] laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves[4]
In lingering lab'rinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish?
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breath'd around:
Ev'ry shade and hallow'd fountain
Murmur'd deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant-Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, Oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.[5]

III

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's darling[6] laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled.
"This pencil take," she said, "whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

[1] Delphi lay at the foot of Mount Parnassus, the abode of the Muses.
[2] The Ægean Sea, to the east of Greece. [3] a river in Attica.
[4] A river in Asia Minor, so winding that the word "meander" is derived from the name.
[5] The Muses went from Greece to Rome, and then to England.
[6] Shakspere.

Nor second he,[1] that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and Time:[2]
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder cloth'd, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictur'd urn
Thoughts, that breathe, and words, that burn.
But ah! 't is heard no more—
Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle[3] bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the good how far—but far above the great.

(1754)

[1] Milton.
[2] Cf. Lucretius I, 73: *flammantia moenia mundi* ("the flaming ramparts of the world").
[3] Pindar, a native of Thebes.

The Bard[1]

I

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
Confusion[2] on thy banners wait,
Though fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's[3] twisted mail,
Nor even thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's[4] curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,[5]
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side[6]
He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Gloucester[7] stood aghast in speechless trance;
'To arms!' cried Mortimer,[8] and couch'd his quiv'ring lance.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,

[1] "The following ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards, that fell into his hands, to be put to death."—Gray's Advertisement prefixed to the poem.

[2] defeat.

[3] The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion. —*Gray.*

[4] Wales. [5] Edward I conquered Wales in 1282–84.

[6] Snowden was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract, which . . . included all the highlands of Cærnarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway.—*Gray.*

[7] Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward.—*Gray.*

[8] Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. He and Gloucester were Lords-Marchers and probably accompanied the King in this expedition.—*Gray.*

Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.[1]

"Cold is Cadwallo's[2] tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:[2]
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon[3] bow his cloud-top'd head.
On dreary Arvon's shore[4] they lie,
Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,[5]
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line."[6]

II

"Weave[7] the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough

[1] Hoel was the son of Prince Owain Gwynedd of North Wales, whom Gray celebrated in his "Triumphs of Owen." The lay is about Llewellyn, a Welsh prince.

[2] Cadwallo and Urien were Welsh poets. [3] a mountain in Wales.

[4] The shores of Cærnarvonshire opposite to the isle of Anglesea.

[5] Gray compares "Julius Cæsar," II, i, 289–290:

"As dear to me as are the ruddy drops,
That visit my sad heart."

[6] See the Norwegian ode ["The Fatal Sisters"] that follows.—*Gray.*

[7] Here the bards take up the song, which continues through l. 100.

The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn[1] shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing King![2]
She-wolf of France,[3] with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heav'n.[4] What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

"Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies![5]
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the Sable Warrior fled?[6]
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,[7]
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening-prey.

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.[8]
Heard ye the din of battle bray,

[1] the river Severn.
[2] Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle.—*Gray.*
[3] Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous Queen.—*Gray.*
[4] Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.—*Gray.*
[5] Death of that King, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress.—*Gray.*
[6] Edward, the Black Prince, dead some time before his father.—*Gray.*
[7] Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign.—*Gray.*
[8] Richard the Second . . . was starved to death.—*Gray.*

Lance to lance, and horse to horse?[1]
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murther fed,[2]
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,[3]
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.[4]
Above, below,[5] the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:[6]
The bristled Boar[7] in infant-gore
Wallows beneath thy thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.[8]
(The web is wove. The work is done.)"
"Stay, oh stay![9] nor thus forlorn
Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,

[1] Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster.—*Gray.*

[2] Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, etc., believed to be murthered secretely in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.—*Gray.*

[3] Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her husband and her crown.—*Gray.* Her husband was Henry VI, and his father was Henry V.

[4] Henry the Sixth very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the crown.—*Gray.*

[5] i.e., on the loom.

[6] The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.—*Gray.*

[7] The silver boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of the Boar.—*Gray.* He murdered the two young sons of Edward IV in 1483.

[8] Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known.—*Gray.*

[9] Addressed to the spirits of the dead bards as they depart. The Bard of the poem is speaking.

Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.[1]
All-hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail![2]

"Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Here from the grave, great Taliessin,[3] hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-colour'd wings.

"The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
In buskin'd measures move[4]
Pale Grief, and Pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice, as of the cherub-choir,[5]
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.[6]
Fond impious man,[7] think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day?

[1] It was the common belief of the Welsh nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-Land, and should return again to reign over Britain.—*Gray.*

[2] Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor.—*Gray.*

[3] Taliessin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the VIth century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen.—*Gray.*

[4] Shakspere.—*Gray.* The buskin was the symbol of tragedy.

[5] Milton.—*Gray.*

[6] The succession of poets after Milton's time.—*Gray.*

[7] Edward I.

To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: with joy I see
The different doom our Fates assign.
Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care,
To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless night.

(1754–57)

The Fatal Sisters

PREFACE

In the eleventh century, Sigurd, Earl of the Orkney-Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of Sictryg with the silken beard, who was making war on his father-in-law Brian, King of Dublin: the Earl and all his forces were cut in pieces, and Sictryg was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of Brian, their King, who fell in the action. On Christmas-day, (the day of the battle) a native of Caithness in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful song; which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped six to the north and as many to the south.

Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of hell prepare,)
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darken'd air.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made,)

And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista[1] black, terrific maid,
Sangrida,[1] and Hilda[1] see,
Join the wayward work to aid:
'T is the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through th' ensanguin'd field:
Gondula,[2] and Geira,[2] spread
O'er the youthful king[3] your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare:
Spite of danger he shall live.
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert-beach
Pent within its bleak domain,

[1] The Valkyriur were female divinities, servants of Odin (or Woden) in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies "Choosers of the slain." They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Valhalla, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale.—*Gray.*

[2] Names of the Valkyrie. [3] Sictryg, mentioned in the Preface.

Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless earl is laid,
Gor'd with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a king[1] shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin[2] weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease, the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
Triumph to the younger king.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenour of our song.
Scotland, through each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed:
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field!

(1761)

[1] Brian, mentioned in the Preface. [2] Erin; Ireland.

The Descent of Odin

UPROSE the King of Men[1] with speed,
And saddled straight his coal-black steed;
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to Hela's[2] drear abode.
Him the Dog of Darkness spied,
His shaggy throat he open'd wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
Foam and human gore distill'd:
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs, that grin;
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The Father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.
 Right against the eastern gate,
By the moss-grown pile he sate;
Where long of yore to sleep was laid
The dust of the prophetic maid.
Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the runic rhyme;[3]
Thrice pronounc'd in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead;
Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breath'd a sullen sound.
 Prophetess. What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mould'ring bones have beat
The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews, and driving rain!

[1] Odin descends to the nether world to learn from a seeress what danger threatens his favorite son, Baldr.

[2] Niflheimr, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds. to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old-age, or by other means than in battle: over it presided Hela, the goddess of death.—*Gray.*

[3] Runes, the name given to ancient Germanic alphabets, were supposed to have magic powers.

Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?
Odin. A traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a warrior's son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,
For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread.
Drest for whom yon golden bed.
Prophetess. Mantling in the goblet see
The pure bev'rage of the bee,[1]
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
'T is the drink of Balder bold:
Balder's head to death is giv'n.
Pain can reach the sons of Heav'n!
Unwilling I my lips unclose:
Leave me, leave me to repose.
Odin. Once again my call obey.
Prophetess, arise, and say,
What dangers Odin's child await,
Who the author of his fate.
Prophetess. In Hoder's hand the hero's doom:
His brother sends him to the tomb.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.
Odin. Prophetess, my spell obey,
Once again arise, and say,
Who th' avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be split.
Prophetess. In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace comprest,
A wondrous boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven hair,
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam;
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
Flaming on the fun'ral pile.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.
Odin. Yet a while my call obey.

[1] mead, a drink made from honey.

Prophetess, awake, and say,
What virgins these, in speechless woe,
That bend to earth their solemn brow,
That their flaxen tresses tear,
And snowy veils, that float in air.
Tell me, whence their sorrows rose:
Then I leave thee to repose.
Prophetess. Ha! no traveller art thou,
King of Men, I know thee now,
Mightiest of a mighty line—
Odin. No boding maid of skill divine
Art thou, nor prophetess of good;
But mother of the giant brood!
Prophetess. Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
That never shall enquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again;
Till Lok[1] has burst his tenfold chain.
Never, till substantial Night
Has reassum'd her ancient right;
Till wrapt in flames, in ruin hurl'd,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

(1761)

[1] Lok is the evil being, who continues in chains till the Twilight of the Gods approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies: even Odin himself and his kindred-deities shall perish.—*Gray.* Lok should be *Loki.*

The Triumphs of Owen

A Fragment

FROM MR. EVANS'S SPECIMENS OF THE WELCH POETRY; LONDON, 1764; QUARTO

Advertisement

Owen succeeded his father Griffin in the Principality of North Wales, A. D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards.

Owen's praise demands my song,
Owen swift, and Owen strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,[1]
Gwyneth's[2] shield, and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart.

Big with hosts of mighty nam
Squadrons three against hime ame,;
This the force of Eirin hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow long and gay
Lochlin[3] plows the watry way;
There the Norman sails afar
Catch the winds, and join the war:
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burthens of the angry deep.

Dauntless on his native sands
The Dragon-Son of Mona[4] stands;
In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest.

[1] Owain Gwynedd . . . was descended in a direct line from Roderic the Great . . . prince of all Wales (in the tenth century), who (according to tradition) divided his principality amongst his three sons.—*Evans.*

[2] North-Wales.—*Gray.*

[3] Denmark.—*Gray.*

[4] The red dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.—*Gray.* Mona is the island of Anglesea.

There the thund'ring strokes begin,
There the press, and there the din;
Talymalfra's[1] rocky shore
Echoing to the battle's roar.
Where his glowing eye-balls turn,
Thousand banners round him burn.
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honourable Death. . . .

(1764)

[1] a small bay on the northeast coast of Anglesea.

Robert Blair

1669–1746

ROBERT BLAIR, the son of the Reverend David Blair, minister of the Old Church of Edinburgh and chaplain to the King, was born in Edinburgh in 1669. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh and took a degree in Holland, but what his course was at either place we do not know. From 1718 to 1730 he lived in Edinburgh as an unemployed probationer, receiving a license to preach in 1729. He belonged to the small literary club which published the *Edinburgh Miscellany* and for which he is supposed to have written two paraphrases of Scripture. In 1728 he published a poem dedicated to the memory of William Law, professor of philosophy in Edinburgh University, whose daughter he married ten years later. In 1731 he entered upon the living of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian. Since he had a private fortune, he was free to devote himself to his avocations, the study of botany and of the old English poets. He also worked in a leisurely manner on his poem, "The Grave." When it was completed, it was refused by two publishers, since both expressed "a doubt whether any person living three hundred miles from town could write so as to be acceptable to the fashionable and the polite." At last a daring publisher risked it, and when the poem came out in 1743 it was an instant and signal success. On February 4, 1746, Blair died and was buried in the churchyard of Athelstaneford.

EDITION

The Poetical Works of Beattie, Blair, and Falconer. Edited, with Lives, etc., by G. Gilfillan. 1854.

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The Grave

WHILST some affect the sun, and some the shade,
Some flee the city, some the hermitage;
Their aims as various, as the roads they take
In journeying through life; the task be mine
To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb;
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all
These travellers meet. Thy succours I implore,
Eternal King! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death. The Grave, dread thing!
Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd: Nature, appall'd,
Shakes off her wonted firmness. Ah! how dark
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes!
Where nought but silence reigns, and night, dark night,
Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
Athwart the gloom profound! The sickly taper
By glimm'ring through thy low-brow'd misty vaults,
(Furr'd round with mouldy damps, and ropy slime)
Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
And only serves to make thy night more irksome.
Well do I know thee by thy trusty yew,
Cheerless, unsocial plant! that loves to dwell
Midst skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms:
Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,
Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)
Embody'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds.
No other merriment, dull tree! is thine.
 See yonder hallow'd fane! the pious work
Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
And bury'd midst the wreck of things which were:
There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead.
The wind is up: hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now I never heard a sound so dreary:
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul bird,
Rook'd in the spire, screams loud: the gloomy aisles,
Black-plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of 'scutcheons
And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound,
Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,
The mansions of the dead. Rous'd from their slumbers,

In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen,
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.
Again the screech-owl shrieks: ungracious sound!
I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.
 Quite round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
(Coeval near with that) all ragged show,
Long lash'd by the rude winds. Some rift half down
Their branchless trunks; others so thin at top,
That scarce two crows could lodge in the same tree.
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd here:
Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs;
Dead men have come again, and walk'd about;
And the great bell has toll'd, unrung, untouch'd.
(Such tales their cheer, at wake or gossiping,
When it draws near to witching time of night.)
 Oft, in the lone church-yard at night I've seen
By glimpse of moonshine, chequering through the trees,
The school-boy with his satchel in his hand,
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)
That tell in homely phrase who lie below.
Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
The sound of something purring at his heels:
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows;
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
O'er some new-open'd grave; and (strange to tell!)
Evanishes at crowing of the cock.
 The new-made widow, too, I've sometimes 'spied,
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:
Listless, she crawls along in doleful black,
Whilst bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
Fast falling down her now untasted cheek:
Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
She drops; whilst busy meddling memory,
In barbarous succession, musters up
The past endearments of their softer hours,

Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,
Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way. . . .

Absurd to think to overreach the grave,
And from the wreck of names to rescue ours!
The best-concerted schemes men lay for fame
Die fast away: only themselves die faster.
The far-fam'd sculptor, and the laurell'd bard,
Those bold insurancers of deathless fame,
Supply their little feeble aids in vain.
The tapering pyramid, th' Egyptian's pride,
And wonder of the world; whose spiky top
Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd
The angry shaking of the winter's storm;
Yet spent at last by th' injuries of heaven,
Shatter'd with age and furrow'd o'er with years,
The mystic cone, with hieroglyphics crusted,
At once gives way. Oh! lamentable sight!
The labour of whole ages lumbers[1] down,
A hideous and mis-shapen length of ruins.
Sepulchral columns wrestle but in vain
With all-subduing time: her cank'ring hand
With calm deliberate malice wasteth them:
Worn on the edge of days, the brass consumes,
The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,
Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge.
Ambition, half convicted of her folly,
Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale. . . .

On this side, and on that, men see their friends
Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out
Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers
In the world's hale and undegenerate days,
Could scarce have leisure for. Fools that we are,
Never to think of death and of ourselves
At the same time! as if to learn to die
Were no concern of ours. O! more than sottish,
For creatures of a day in gamesome mood,
To frolic on eternity's dread brink

[1] Moves heavily, on account of unwieldiness of bulk or mass.—*N.E.D.*

Unapprehensive; when, for aught we know,
The very first swoln surge shall sweep us in.
Think we, or think we not, time hurries on
With a resistless unremitting stream;
Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight-thief,
That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,
And carries off his prize. What is this world?
What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,
Strew'd with Death's spoils, the spoils of animals
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones!
The very turf on which we tread, once liv'd:
And we that live must lend our carcases
To cover our own offspring: in their turns
They too must cover theirs. 'T is here all meet:
The shiv'ring Icelander and sun-burnt Moor;
Men of all climes, that never met before;
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,
His sov'reign's keeper and the people's scourge,
Are huddled out of sight! Here lie abash'd
The great negotiators of the earth,
And celebrated masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts.
Now vain their treaty-skill: Death scorns to treat.
Here the o'er-loaded slave flings down his burden
From his gall'd shoulders;—and when the cruel tyrant,
With all his guards and tools of pow'r about him,
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm,—and, quick as thought, escapes,
Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest. . . .

But know, that thou must render up thy dead,
And with high inter'st too.—They are not thine;
But only in thy keeping for a season,
Till the great promised day of restitution;
When loud diffusive sound from brazen trump
Of strong-lung'd cherub, shall alarm thy captives,
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,
Day-light and liberty.—
Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal
The mines that lay long forming under ground,
In their dark cells immur'd; but now full ripe,

And pure as silver from the crucible,
That twice has stood the torture of the fire
And inquisition of the forge.—We know,
The illustrious Deliverer of mankind,
The Son of God, thee foil'd.—Him in thy pow'r
Thou couldst not hold:—self-vigorous he rose,
And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook
Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent:
(Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!)
Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,
And show'd himself alive to chosen witnesses,
By proofs so strong, that the most slow-assenting
Had not a scruple left.—This having done,
He mounted up to heav'n.—Methinks I see him
Climb the aërial heights, and glide along
Athwart the severing clouds: but the faint eye,
Flung backward in the chase, soon drops its hold,
Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
Heav'n's portals wide expand to let him in;
Nor are his friends shut out: as some great prince
Not for himself alone procures admission,
But for his train:—it was his royal will
That where he is, there should his followers be.
Death only lies between.—A gloomy path!
Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears:
But nor untrod nor tedious: the fatigue
Will soon go off. Besides, there's no by-road
To bliss.—Then why, like ill-condition'd children,
Start we at transient hardships in the way
That leads to purer air, and softer skies,
And a ne'er setting sun?—Fools that we are!
We wish to be, where sweets unwith'ring bloom;
But straight our wish revoke, and will not go.
So have I seen, upon a summer's even,
Fast by a riv'let's brink, a youngster play:
How wishfully he looks to stem the tide!
This moment resolute, next unresolv'd:
At last he dips his foot; but as he dips,
His fears redouble, and he runs away
From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now
Of all the flow'rs that paint the further bank,

And smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome Death!
That after many a painful bleeding step
Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
On the long-wish'd-for shore.—Prodigious change!
Our bane turn'd to a blessing!—Death, disarm'd,
Loses his fellness quite.—All thanks to Him
Who scourg'd the venom out.—Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!
Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.
Behold him! in the evening tide of life,
A life well spent, whose early care it was
His riper years should not upbraid his green:
By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away;
Yet like the sun seems larger at his setting!
High in his faith and hopes, look! how he reaches
After the prize in view! and, like a bird
That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away!
Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded
To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
Of the fast-coming harvest. Then! O then!
Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
Shrunk to a thing of nought. O how he longs
To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd!
'T is done; and now he's happy! The glad soul
Has not a wish uncrown'd. Even the lag flesh
Rests too in hope of meeting once again
Its better half, never to sunder more.
Nor shall it hope in vain: the time draws on
When not a single spot of burial-earth,
Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,
But must give back its long-committed dust
Inviolate: and faithfully shall these
Make up the full account; not the least atom
Embezzled, or mislaid, of the whole tale.
Each soul shall have a body ready-furnished;
And each shall have his own. Hence, ye profane,
Ask not, how this can be? Sure the same pow'r
That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,
Can reassemble the loose scatter'd parts,
And put them as they were. Almighty God

Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd
Through length of days; and what he can, he will:
His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.
When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring dust,
Not unattentive to the call, shall wake:
And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,
With a new elegance of form, unknown
To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul
Mistake its partner; but amidst the crowd,
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush, with all th' impatience of a man
That's new come home, who, having long been absent,
With haste runs over ev'ry different room,
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!
Nor time, nor death, shall ever part them more.
'T is but a night, a long and moonless night,
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.
Thus, at the shut of ev'n, the weary bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cow'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings and bears away.

(1743)

John Armstrong

1709–1779

JOHN ARMSTRONG, the son of a clergyman, was born in Castleton, Roxburghshire, Scotland, in 1709. He received his degree of M.D. from Edinburgh University in 1732 and began practicing medicine in London. Some verses entitled "Winter," which were not published till 1770, were written by him as early as 1725. His first published poem, the "Œconomy of Love," came out in 1736; of it A. H. Bullen says, "a more nauseous piece of work could not easily be found" (D.N.B.). His progress in his profession did not seem to be any more pleasant. In 1744 he brought out his "Art of Preserving Health," in four books. Two years later he was appointed physician to the Hospital for Lame, Maimed, and Sick Soldiers in London, and he continued to pass his leisure time by writing mediocre poems and essays. In 1760 he was sent as physician to the army in Germany, and while there he wrote a poem called "Day," which appeared in 1761. On his return to England he was put on half-pay for the rest of his life. In 1770 he published in *Miscellanies* the poems he wished to preserve, including the final four stanzas of Thomson's "The Castle of Indolence." After a tour on the Continent, in 1771 he wrote "A Short Ramble through France and Italy." His "Medical Essays" (1773) attacked the medical profession for incompetency and servility. On September 7, 1779, he died as the result of a fall when he was stepping into his carriage in Russell Street. He left an estate of £3000, a tidy sum to save out of a small practice and a small pension, even for a Scotchman settled in London.

EDITION

The Poetical Works of Armstrong, Dyer, and Green. Edited by G. Gilfillan. 1858.

The Art of Preserving Health

BOOK II

What dext'rous thousands just within the goal
Of wild debauch direct their nightly course!
Perhaps no sickly qualms bedim their days,
No morning admonitions shock the head.
But ah! what woes remain! Life rolls apace,
And that incurable disease old age,
In youthful bodies more severely felt,
More sternly active, shakes their blasted prime:
Except kind Nature by some hasty blow
Prevent the lingering fates. For know, whate'er
Beyond its natural fervour hurries on
The sanguine tide; whether the frequent bowl,
High-season'd fare, or exercise to toil
Protracted; spurs to its last stage tir'd life,
And sows the temples with untimely snow.
When life is new, the ductile fibres feel
The heart's increasing force; and, day by day,
The growth advances: till the larger tubes,
Acquiring (from their elemental veins,
Condens'd to solid chords) a firmer tone,
Sustain, and just sustain, th' impetuous blood.
Here stops the growth. With overbearing pulse
And pressure, still the great destroy the small;
Still with the ruins of the small grow strong.
Life glows meantime, amid the grinding force
Of viscous fluids and elastic tubes;
Its various functions vigorously are plied
By strong machinery; and in solid health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er disease.
But the full ocean ebbs: there is a point,
By nature fix'd, whence life must downward tend.
For still the beating tide consolidates
The stubborn vessels, more reluctant still
To the weak throbs of th' ill-supported heart.
This languishing, these strength'ning by degrees
To hard unyielding unelastic bone,
Through tedious channels the congealing flood

Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on;
It loiters still: and now it stirs no more.
This is the period few attain; the death
Of nature; thus (so Heav'n ordain'd it) life
Destroys itself; and could these laws have chang'd,
Nestor might now the fates of Troy relate;
And Homer live immortal as his song.
What does not fade? The tower that long had stood
The crush of thunder and the warring winds,
Shook by the slow but sure destroyer Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base.
And flinty pyramids, and walls of brass,
Descend: the Babylonian spires are sunk;
Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down.
Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
And tottering empires rush by their own weight.
This huge rotundity we tread grows old;
And all those worlds that roll around the sun,
The sun himself, shall die; and ancient Night
Again involve the desolate abyss:
Till the great Father through the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws.
For through the regions of unbounded space,
Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
Being, in various systems, fluctuates still
Between creation and abhorr'd decay:
It ever did, perhaps, and ever will.
New worlds are still emerging from the deep;
The old descending, in their turns to rise.

BOOK III

THE shades descend, and midnight o'er the world
Expands her sable wings. Great Nature droops
Through all her works. Now happy he whose toil
Has o'er his languid powerless limbs diffus'd
A pleasing lassitude: he not in vain
Invokes the gentle deity of dreams.
His powers the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose: on him the balmy dews

Of sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion; or on fancy's wings
Visit the paradise of happy dreams,
And waken cheerful as the lively morn,
Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full:
But be the first concoction half-matur'd
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toils
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires, whom trembling from the tower that rocks
Amid the clouds, or Calpe's hideous height,[1]
The busy demons hurl; or in the main
O'erwhelm; or bury struggling under ground.
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes
Can counterpoise of that most wretched man,
Whose nights are shaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Orestes;[2] whose delirious brain,
Stung by the Furies, works with poison'd thought:
While pale and monstrous painting shocks the soul;
And mangled consciousness bemoans itself
For ever torn; and chaos floating round.
What dreams presage, what dangers these or those
Portend to sanity, though prudent seers
Reveal'd of old and men of deathless fame,
We would not to the superstitious mind
Suggest new throbs, new vanities of fear.
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To banish omens and all restless woes. . . .

BOOK IV

VAIN are the consolations of the wise;
In vain your friends would reason down your pain.
O ye, whose souls relentless love has tam'd
To soft distress, or friends untimely fallen!
Court not the luxury of tender thought;

[1] the modern Gibraltar.
[2] Orestes, after avenging his father's death by slaying his mother Clytemnestra, was driven mad by the Furies.

Nor deem it impious to forget those pains
That hurt the living, nought avail the dead.
Go, soft enthusiast! quit the cypress groves,
Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune
Your sad complaint. Go, seek the cheerful haunts
Of men, and mingle with the bustling crowd;
Lay schemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wish
Of nobler minds, and push them night and day.
Or join the caravan in quest of scenes
New to your eyes, and shifting every hour,
Beyond the Alps, beyond the Apennines.
Or more advent'rous, rush into the field
Where war grows hot; and, raging through the sky
The lofty trumpet swells the madd'ning soul:
And in the hardy camp and toilsome march
Forget all softer and less manly cares. . . .

(1744)

Mark Akenside

1721–1770

MARK AKENSIDE, the son of a butcher, was born on November 9, 1721, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and was educated at a dissenting academy. In 1737 he sent a poem, "The Virtuoso," in imitation of Spenser, to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and had it accepted. The next year he began "The Pleasures of Imagination"; in the August issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year appeared his "A British Philippic," a patriotic Tory poem, which in 1739 was published separately as a folio pamphlet. The citizens of Newcastle were so pleased with young Akenside's progress that they sent him to Edinburgh University to study for the ministry; but at the end of the first term he went over to medicine. He reimbursed the good burghers for their outlay—how, we do not know. In 1740 he was elected a member of the Medical Society of Edinburgh, and in the same year he privately printed a pamphlet of verse. He then returned to Newcastle and practiced medicine for two years, thus indirectly (we trust) repaying again the citizens of Newcastle for their kindness to him. In 1743 he went to London and the next year published "The Pleasures of Imagination," which was at once a success. After a relatively brief residence at Leyden he received the degree of doctor of physic from the university, and on returning to England he practiced at Northampton. His "Epistle to Curio" (1744) was an attack on William Pulteney for his recantation of liberal politics. In the next year came out his "Odes on Various Subjects," after the manner of Collins and Gray. He settled now in London and practiced at North End, Hampstead, with little success until an old friend set him up with a fine house, an income of £300 a year, and a chariot, and secured for him an excellent practice—which was better for his comfort than for his poetry. In 1746 appeared his last poem of any merit, "Hymn to the Naiads." Then he became the editor of Dodsley's *Museum*, to which he contributed frequently. In 1753 Cambridge conferred a doctorate upon him; then he was made a fellow of the Royal Society, and the year following, of the College of Physicians. In 1757 he began a revision of "The Pleasures." The next year he published an "Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England." In 1759 he was appointed physician to Christ's Hospital. He died on June 23, 1770.

EDITIONS

Poetical Works of Mark Akenside. With a Life by A. Dyce. 1835; 1857.
Poetical Works of Mark Akenside and John Dyer. Edited by R.A. Willmott. 1855.
Poetical Works of Akenside. With Life by G. Gilfillan. 1857.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Bucke, C.: "On the Life, Writings, and Genius of Akenside." 1832.
Potter, G. R.: "Mark Akenside, Prophet of Evolution," in *Modern Philology*, XXIV (1926), pp. 55ff.

The Pleasures of Imagination

BOOK I

With what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men; and what the pleasing stores
Which beauteous imitation thence derives
To deck the poet's, or the painter's toil;
My verse unfolds. Attend, ye gentle powers
Of musical delight! and while I sing
Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.
Thou, smiling queen of every tuneful breast,
Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flowers and dews to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakespeare lies, be present: and with thee
Let Fiction come, upon her vagrant wings
Wafting ten thousand colours through the air,
Which, by the glances of her magic eye,
She blends and shifts at will, countless forms,
Her wild creation. Goddess of the lyre,
Which rules the accents of the moving sphere,
Wilt thou, eternal Harmony! descend
And join this festive train? for with thee comes
The guide, the guardian of their lovely sports,
Majestic Truth; and where Truth deigns to come,
Her sister Liberty will not be far.

Be present all ye Genii, who conduct
The wandering footsteps of the youthful bard,
New to your springs and shades: who touch his ear
With finer sounds: who heighten to his eye
The bloom of nature, and before him turn
The gayest, happiest attitude of things.
 Oft have the laws of each poetic strain
The critic-verse employ'd; yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, though importing most
A poet's name: for fruitless is the attempt,
By dull obedience and by creeping toil
Obscure to conquer the severe ascent
Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius; Nature's hand
Must string his nerves, and imp[1] his eagle-wings
Impatient of the painful steep, to soar
High as the summit; there to breathe at large
Æthereal air; with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise. These flattering scenes,
To this neglected labour court my song;
Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task
To paint the finest features of the mind,
And to most subtile and mysterious things
Give colour, strength, and motion. But the love
Of nature and the muses bids explore,
Through secret paths erewhile untrod by man,
The fair poetic region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,
And shade my temples with unfading flowers
Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,
Where never poet gain'd a wreath before.
 From heaven my strains begin; from heaven descends
The flame of genius to the human breast,
And love and beauty, and poetic joy
And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun
Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night
The moon suspended her serener lamp;
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn'd the globe,
Or Wisdom taught the sons of men her lore;

[1] To engraft feathers in the wing of a bird, so as to make good losses or deficiencies, and thus restore or improve the powers of flight.—*N.E.D.*

Then liv'd the Almighty One: then, deep-retir'd
In his unfathom'd essence, view'd the forms,
The forms eternal of created things;
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
The mountains, woods, and streams, the rolling globe,
And Wisdom's mien celestial. From the first
Of days, on them his love divine he fix'd,
His admiration; till in time complete
What he admir'd and lov'd, his vital smile
Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
Of life informing each organic frame,
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves;
Hence light and shade alternate; warmth and cold;
And clear autumnal skies and vernal showers,
And all the fair variety of things.
But not alike to every mortal eye
Is this great scene unveil'd. For since the claims
Of social life, to different labours urge
The active powers of man; with wise intent
The hand of Nature on peculiar minds
Imprints a different bias, and to each
Decrees its province in the common toil.
To some she taught the fabric of the sphere,
The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
The golden zones of heaven: to some she gave
To weigh the moment of eternal things,
Of time, and space, and fate's unbroken chain,
And will's quick impulse: others by the hand
She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
What healing virtue swells the tender veins
Of herbs and flowers; or what the beams of morn
Draw forth, distilling from the clifted rind
In balmy tears. But some, to higher hopes
Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame.
To these the Sire Omnipotent unfolds
The world's harmonious volume, there to read
The transcript of Himself. On every part
They trace the bright impressions of his hand;
In earth or air, the meadow's purple stores,
The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form

Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd
That uncreated beauty, which delights
The Mind supreme. They also feel her charms,
Enamour'd; they partake the eternal joy.
For as old Memnon's image, long renown'd
By fabling Nilus, to the quivering touch
Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string
Consenting, sounded through the warbling air
Unbidden strains; even so did Nature's hand
To certain species of external things,
Attune the finer organs of the mind:
So the glad impulse of congenial powers,
Or of sweet sound, or fair proportion'd form,
The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,
Thrills through Imagination's tender frame,
From nerve to nerve: all naked and alive
They catch the spreading rays; till now the soul
At length discloses every tuneful spring,
To that harmonious movement from without
Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain
Diffuses its enchantment; Fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
And vales of bliss: the intellectual power
Bends from his awful throne a wondering ear,
And smiles; the passions, gently sooth'd away,
Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
Alone are waking; love and joy, serene
As airs that fan the summer. O! attend,
Whoe'er thou art, whom these delights can touch,
Whose candid bosom the refining love
Of Nature warms, O! listen to my song;
And I will guide thee to her favourite walks,
And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her loveliest features to thy view.
Know then, whate'er of Nature's pregnant stores,
Whate'er of mimic Art's reflected forms,
With love and admiration thus inflame
The powers of Fancy, her delighted sons
To three illustrious orders have referr'd;
Three sister graces, whom the painter's hand,
The poet's tongue confesses; the sublime,

The wonderful, the fair. I see them dawn!
I see the radiant visions, where they rise,
More lovely than when Lucifer displays
His beaming forehead through the gates of morn,
To lead the train of Phœbus and the spring.
 Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
Amid the vast creation; why ordain'd
Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame;
But that the Omnipotent might send him forth,
In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
As on a boundless theatre, to run
The great career of justice; to exalt
His generous aim to all diviner deeds;
To chase each partial purpose from his breast;
And through the mists of passion and of sense,
And through the tossing tide of chance and pain,
To hold his course unfaltering, while the voice
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
Of nature, calls him to his high reward,
The applauding smile of Heaven? Else wherefore burns
In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope,
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession? wherefore darts the mind,
With such resistless ardour to embrace
Majestic forms; impatient to be free,
Spurning the gross control of wilful might;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils;
Proud to be daring? Who but rather turns
To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view,
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame?
Who that, from Alpine heights, his labouring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey
Nilus or Ganges rolling his bright wave
Through mountains, plains, through empires black with shade,
And continents of sand; will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet? The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tir'd of earth

And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Through fields of air; pursues the flying storm;
Rides on the vollied lightnings through the heavens;
Or, yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high she soars
The blue profound, and, hovering round the sun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light; beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The fated rounds of Time. Thence far effus'd
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets; through its burning signs
Exulting measures the perennial wheel
Of Nature, and looks back on all the stars,
Whose blended light, as with a milky zone,
Invests the orient. Now amaz'd she views
The empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,
Beyond this concave heaven, their calm abode;
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
Has travell'd the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
Even on the barriers of the world, untir'd,
She meditates the eternal depth below;
Till half recoiling, down the headlong steep
She plunges; soon o'erwhelm'd and swallow'd up
In that immense of being. There her hopes
Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
Of mortal man, the Sovereign Maker said,
That not in humble nor in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robes, nor pleasure's flowery lap,
The soul should find enjoyment; but from these,
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.

Call now to mind what high capacious powers
Lie folded up in man; how far beyond
The praise of mortals, may the eternal growth
Of Nature to perfection half divine,
Expand the blooming soul? What pity, then,

Should sloth's unkindly fogs depress to earth
Her tender blossom; choke the streams of life,
And blast her spring! Far otherwise design'd
Almighty Wisdom; Nature's happy cares
The obedient heart far otherwise incline.
Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active power
To brisker measures: witness the neglect
Of all familiar prospects, though beheld
With transport once; the fond attentive gaze
Of young astonishment; the sober zeal
Of age, commenting on prodigious things.
For such the bounteous providence of Heaven,
In every breast implanting this desire
Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
With unremitted labour to pursue
Those sacred stores that wait the ripening soul,
In Truth's exhaustless bosom. What need words
To paint its power? For this the daring youth
Breaks from his weeping mother's anxious arms,
In foreign climes to rove: the pensive sage,
Heedless of sleep, or midnight's harmful damp,
Hangs o'er the sickly taper; and, untir'd,
The virgin follows, with enchanted step,
The mazes of some wild and wondrous tale,
From morn to eve; unmindful of her form,
Unmindful of the happy dress that stole
The wishes of the youth, when every maid
With envy pin'd. Hence, finally, by night
The village-matron, round the blazing hearth,
Suspends the infant audience with her tales,
Breathing astonishment! of witching rhymes,
And evil spirits; of the death-bed call
Of him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd
The orphan's portion; of unquiet souls
Risen from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life conceal'd; of shapes that walk
At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of hell around the murderer's bed.
At every solemn pause the crowd recoil,
Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd

With shivering sighs; till eager for the event,
Around the beldame all erect they hang,
Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd.
But lo! disclos'd in all her smiling pomp,
Where Beauty onward moving claims the verse
Her charms inspire: the freely-flowing verse
In thy immortal praise, O form divine,
Smooths her mellifluent stream. Thee, Beauty, thee
The regal dome, and thy enlivening ray
The mossy roofs adore: thou, better sun!
For ever beamest on the enchanted heart
Love, and harmonious wonder, and delight
Poetic. Brightest progeny of Heaven!
How shall I trace thy features? where select
The roseate hues to emulate thy bloom?
Haste then, my song, thro' Nature's wide expanse,
Haste then, and gather all her comeliest wealth,
Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains,
Whate'er the waters, or the liquid air,
To deck thy lovely labour. Wilt thou fly
With laughing Autumn to the Atlantic isles,
And range with him the Hesperian field, and see
Where'er his fingers touch the fruitful grove,
The branches shoot with gold; where'er his step
Marks the glad soil, the tender clusters grow
With purple ripeness, and invest each hill
As with the blushes of an evening sky?
Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume,
Where, gliding through his daughter's honour'd shades
The smooth Penéus[1] from his glassy flood
Reflects purpureal Tempe's pleasant scene?
Fair Tempe! haunt belov'd of sylvan powers,
Of nymphs and fauns; where in the golden age
They play'd in secret on the shady brink
With ancient Pan: while round their choral steps
Young Hours and genial Gales with constant hand
Shower'd blossoms, odours, shower'd ambrosial dews,
And spring's Elysian bloom. Her flowery store
To thee nor Tempe shall refuse; nor watch

[1] The principal river of Thessaly; it passes through the Vale of Tempe.

Of winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits[1]
From thy free spoil. O bear then, unreprov'd,
Thy smiling treasures to the green recess
Where young Dione stays. With sweetest airs
Entice her forth to lend her angel form
For Beauty's honour'd image. Hither turn
Thy graceful footsteps; hither, gentle maid,
Incline thy polish'd forehead: let thy eyes
Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn;
And may the fanning breezes waft aside
Thy radiant locks; disclosing, as it bends
With airy softness from the marble neck,
The cheek fair-blooming, and the rosy lip,
Where winning smiles and pleasures sweet as love,
With sanctity and wisdom, tempering blend
Their soft allurement. Then the pleasing force
Of Nature, and her kind, parental care,
Worthier I'd sing; then all the enamour'd youth,
With each admiring virgin, to my lyre
Should throng attentive, while I point on high
Where Beauty's living image, like the Morn
That wakes in Zephyr's arms the blushing May,
Moves onward; or as Venus, when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car, and smil'd,
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And each cerulean sister of the flood
With loud acclaim attend her o'er the waves,
To seek the Idalian[2] bower. Ye smiling band
Of youths and virgins, who through all the maze
Of young desire with rival steps pursue
This charm of Beauty; if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite, hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words.
I do not mean to wake the gloomy form
Of Superstition, dress'd in Wisdom's garb,
To damp your tender hopes; I do not mean

[1] The serpent sent by Here to guard the golden apples when the Hesperides, whom she had appointed to guard the trees, were remiss in their duty.
[2] Idalium was a town in Cyprus, sacred to Aphrodite, who hence bore the sur-name Idalia.—*Peck.*

To bid the jealous thunderer fire the heavens,
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth
To fright you from your joys; my cheerful song
With better omens calls you to the field,
Pleas'd with your generous ardour in the chase,
And warm like you. Then tell me, for ye know,
Does Beauty ever deign to dwell where health
And active use are strangers? Is her charm
Confess'd in aught, whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless? Or did Nature mean
This pleasing call the herald of a lie;
To hide the shame of discord and disease,
And catch with fair hypocrisy the heart
Of idle faith? O no! with better cares
The indulgent mother, conscious how infirm
Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,
By this illustrious image, in each kind
Still most illustrious where the object holds
Its native powers most perfect, she by this
Illumes the headstrong impulse of desire,
And sanctifies his choice. The generous glebe
Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear tract
Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,
The bloom of nectar'd fruitage ripe to sense,
And every charm of animated things,
Are only pledges of a state sincere,
The integrity and order of their frame,
When all is well within, and every end
Accomplish'd. Thus was Beauty sent from heaven,
The lovely ministress of Truth and Good
In this dark world; for Truth and Good are one,
And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like participation. Wherefore, then,
O sons of earth! would ye dissolve the tie?
O wherefore, with a rash impetuous aim,
Seek ye those flowery joys with which the hand
Of lavish Fancy paints each flattering scene
Where Beauty seems to dwell, nor once inquire
Where is the sanction of eternal Truth,
Or where the seal of undeceitful Good,
To save your search from folly! Wanting these,

Lo! Beauty withers in your void embrace,
And with the glittering of an idiot's toy
Did Fancy mock your vows. Nor let the gleam
Of youthful hope that shines upon your hearts
Be chill'd or clouded at this awful task,
To learn the lore of undeceitful Good,
And Truth eternal. Though the poisonous charms
Of baleful Superstition guide the feet
Of servile numbers, through a dreary way
To their abode, through deserts, thorns, and mire;
And leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn
To muse at last, amid the ghostly gloom
Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells;
To walk with spectres through the midnight shade,
And to the screaming owl's accursed song
Attune the dreadful workings of his heart;
Yet be not ye dismay'd. A gentler star
Your lovely search illumines. From the grove
Where Wisdom talk'd with her Athenian sons,
Could my ambitious hand entwine a wreath
Of Plato's olive with the Mantuan bay,
Then should my powerful verse at once dispel
Those monkish horrors; then in light divine
Disclose the Elysian prospect, where the steps
Of those whom Nature charms, through blooming walks,
Through fragrant mountains and poetic streams,
Amid the train of sages, heroes, bards,
Led by their winged Genius and the choir
Of laurell'd science and harmonious art,
Proceed exulting to the eternal shrine,
Where Truth conspicuous with her sister-twins,
The undivided partners of her sway,
With Good and Beauty reigns. O let not us,
Lull'd by luxurious Pleasure's languid strain,
Or crouching to the frowns of bigot rage,
O let us not a moment pause to join
That godlike band. And if the gracious Power
Who first awaken'd my untutor'd song,
Will to my invocation breathe anew
The tuneful spirit; then through all our paths,
Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre

Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,
When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
Of luxury's allurement; whether firm
Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
To urge bold Virtue's unremitted nerve,
And wake the strong divinity of soul
That conquers chance and fate; or whether struck
For sounds of triumph, to proclaim her toils
Upon the lofty summit, round her brow
To twine the wreath of incorruptive praise;
To trace her hallow'd light through future worlds,
And bless Heaven's image in the heart of man. . . .

(1738–44)

For a Grotto

To ME, whom in their lays the shepherds call
Actæa, daughter of the neighbouring stream,
This cave belongs. The fig-tree and the vine,
Which o'er the rocky entrance downward shoot,
Were placed by Glycon. He with cowslips pale,
Primrose, and purple lychnis, deck'd the green
Before my threshold, and my shelving walls
With honeysuckle cover'd. Here at noon,
Lull'd by the murmur of my rising fount,
I slumber; here my clustering fruits I tend;
Or from the humid flowers, at break of day,
Fresh garlands weave, and chase from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious. Enter in,
O stranger, undismay'd. Nor bat, nor toad
Here lurks: and if thy breast of blameless thoughts
Approve thee, not unwelcome shalt thou tread
My quiet mansion: chiefly, if thy name
Wise Pallas and the immortal Muses own.

(1758)

Ode to the Evening Star

TONIGHT retir'd the queen of heaven
With young Endymion stays:
And now to Hesper is it given
Awhile to rule the vacant sky,
Till she shall to her lamp supply
A stream of brighter rays.

O Hesper, while the starry throng
With awe thy path surrounds,
Oh listen to my suppliant song,
If haply now the vocal sphere
Can suffer thy delighted ear
To stoop to mortal sounds.

So may the bridegroom's genial strain
Thee still invoke to shine:
So may the bride's unmarried train
To Hymen chaunt their flattering vow,
Still that his lucky torch may glow
With lustre pure as thine.

Far other vows must I prefer
To thy indulgent power.
Alas, but now I paid my tear
On fair Olympia's virgin tomb:
And lo, from thence, in quest I roam
Of Philomela's bower.

Propitious send thy golden ray,
Thou purest light above:
Let no false flame seduce to stray
Where gulf or steep lie hid for harm:
But lead where music's healing charm
May soothe afflicted love.

To them, by many a grateful song
In happier seasons vow'd,
These lawns, Olympia's haunts, belong:
Oft by yon silver stream we walk'd,

Or fix'd, while Philomela talk'd,
Beneath yon copses stood.

Nor seldom, where the beechen boughs
That roofless tower invade,
We came, while her enchanting Muse
The radiant moon above us held:
Till by a clamorous owl compell'd
She fled the solemn shade.

But hark; I hear her liquid tone.
Now, Hesper, guide my feet
Down the red marl with moss o'ergrown,
Through yon wild thicket next the plain,
Whose hawthorns choke the winding lane
Which leads to her retreat.

See the green space: on either hand
Enlarg'd it spreads around:
See, in the midst she takes her stand,
Where one old oak his awful shade
Extends o'er half the level mead
Enclos'd in woods profound.

Hark, how through many a melting note
She now prolongs her lays:
How sweetly down the void they float!
The breeze their magic path attends:
The stars shine out: the forest bends:
The wakeful heifers graze.

Whoe'er thou art whom chance may bring
To this sequester'd spot,
If then the plaintive Siren sing,
Oh softly tread beneath her bower,
And think of Heaven's disposing power,
Of man's uncertain lot.

Oh think, o'er all this mortal stage,
What mournful scenes arise:
What ruin waits on kingly rage:

How often virtue dwells with woe:
How many griefs from knowledge flow:
 How swiftly pleasure flies.

Oh sacred bird, let me at eve,
 Thus wandering all alone,
Thy tender counsel oft receive,
Bear witness to thy pensive airs,
And pity Nature's common cares
 Till I forget my own.

(Publ. 1772)

William Collins

1721–1759

WILLIAM COLLINS, the son of a "respectable hatter" (D.N.B.), was born on or about Christmas Day, 1721, at Chichester. In 1733 he was admitted to Winchester College on the foundation, with free board, lodging, and tuition. Here he was the school fellow of Joseph Warton, and almost from the first they were rivals in poetic composition. Collins had two poems published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1739. About this time he wrote the "Persian Eclogues," which were published in 1742. In 1740 he entered Queen's College, Oxford, as a commoner, and the next year he was elected to a demyship in Magdalen College, a scholarship which gave him half the allowance of a fellowship. He took his bachelor's degree in 1743 and shortly after that went to London. A volume of "Odes," published in December, 1746 (with "1747" on the title-page), failed so badly that he burned the unsold copies in disgust. "Evening" and "How Sleep the Brave" appeared in Dodsley's *Museum*, IV, in 1749. Johnson freed him from a prowling bailiff by obtaining for him advance payment on a projected translation of Aristotle's "Poetics," and Collins escaped into the country. The death in 1748 of his friend, James Thomson, led him in 1749 to write a memorial ode; in that year he also wrote his "Dirge in Cymbeline." A legacy of £2000 soon afterwards enabled him to return to Chichester, free from the fear of bailiffs. He at once canceled his engagement to translate Aristotle. In this year, 1749, he composed his "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland." This poem he gave to John Home, the author of "Douglas," who gave it to a friend, among whose papers it was found by Alexander Carlyle; who, in turn, handed it over to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, after which it was published in the *Transactions* in 1788, with emendations by Carlyle and a passage supplied by Henry Mackenzie. In 1751 Collins suffered the beginnings of a mental disorder, which first manifested itself in weakness and depression but later resulted in violent derangement and in his death, on June 12, 1759.

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A Song from Shakespear's Cymbeline

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE, SUPPOS'D TO BE DEAD

I

To FAIR Fidele's grassy tomb
 Soft maids, and village hinds shall bring
Each op'ning sweet, of earliest bloom,
 And rifle all the breathing spring.

II

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove:

But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

III

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

IV

The redbreast oft at ev'ning hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid:
With hoary moss, and gather'd flow'rs,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell:
Or midst the chace on ev'ry plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

VI

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed:
Belov'd, till life could charm no more;
And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

(1744)

Ode to Simplicity

I

O THOU by Nature taught,
To breathe her genuine thought,
In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly strong:
Who first on mountains wild,
In Fancy loveliest child,
Thy babe, or Pleasure's, nurs'd the pow'rs of song!

II

Thou, who with hermit heart
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall:
But com'st a decent maid
In Attic robe array'd,
O chaste unboastful nymph, to thee I call!

III

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's[1] thymy shore,
By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs dear,
By her,[2] whose love-lorn woe
In ev'ning musings slow
Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear:

IV

By old Cephisus[3] deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep
In warbled wand'rings round thy green retreat,
On whose enamel'd side
When holy Freedom died
No equal haunt allur'd thy future feet.

V

O sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
The flow'rs that sweetest breathe,
Tho' beauty cull'd the wreath,
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

[1] a town in Sicily famous for its honey.

[2] The . . . nightingale, for which Sophocles seems to have entertained a peculiar fondness.—*Collins.* The expression "sad Electra's poet" is taken from Milton's eighth sonnet, and the reference there is to Euripides and his play "Electra." Sophocles also wrote a tragedy "Electra," in which Electra says that "the plaintive nightingale is more pleasing to her than such as forget the death of their parents."—*Bronson.*

[3] a river in Attica that flowed past Athens.

VI

While Rome could none esteem
But Virtue's patriot theme,
You lov'd her hills, and led her laureate band:
But staid to sing alone
To one distinguish'd throne,[1]
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land.

VII

No more, in hall or bow'r,
The passions own thy pow'r,
Love, only love her[2] forceless numbers mean:
For thou hast left her shrine,
Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

VIII

Tho' taste, tho' genius bless,
To some divine excess,
Faints the cold work till thou inspire the whole;
What each, what all supply,
May court, may charm our eye,
Thou, only thou can'st raise the meeting soul!

IX

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task,
I only seek to find thy temp'rate vale:
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

(1746)

[1] the throne of Augustus.
[2] "Her" means *Rome's*. The reference is to the poor poetry of mediæva and modern Italy.

Ode on the Poetical Character

I

As ONCE,[1] if not with light regard,
I read aright that gifted bard,[2]
(Him whose school above the rest
His loveliest Elfin queen has blest.)
One, only one, unrival'd fair,[3]
Might hope the magic girdle wear,
At solemn turney hung on high,
The wish of each love-darting eye;
Lo! to each other nymph in turn applied,
As if, in air unseen, some hov'ring hand,
Some chaste and angel-friend to virgin-fame,
With whisper'd spell had burst the starting band,
It left unblest her loath'd dishonour'd side;
Happier hopeless fair, if never
Her baffled hand with vain endeavour
Had touch'd that fatal zone to her denied!
Young Fancy thus, to me divinest name,
To whom,[4] prepar'd and bath'd in Heav'n,
The cest[5] of amplest pow'r is giv'n:
To few the God-like gift assigns,
To gird their blest, prophetic loins,
And gaze her visions wild, and feel unmix'd her flame!

II

The band, as fairy legends say,
Was wove on that creating day,
When he, who call'd with thought to birth
Yon tented sky, this laughing earth,
And drest with springs, and forests tall,
And pour'd the main engirting all,
Long by the lov'd Enthusiast[6] woo'd,

[1] The corresponding clause is in l. 17, "Young Fancy thus . . . "
[2] Spenser.
[3] According to Collins, the "one unrival'd fair" is Florimel; in reality it was Amoret, who alone of those present could wear the magic girdle ("Faerie Queen," IV, v, 16–19).
[4] "whom" refers to "Fancy." [5] girdle.
[6] The "lov'd Enthusiast" is the "Young Fancy" of l. 17.

Himself in some diviner mood,
Retiring, sate[1] with her alone,
And plac'd her on his sapphire throne,
The whiles, the vaulted shrine around,
Seraphic wires were heard to sound,
Now sublimest triumph swelling,
Now on love and mercy dwelling;
And she, from out the veiling cloud,
Breath'd her magic notes aloud:
And thou, thou rich-hair'd youth of morn,[2]
And all thy subject life was born![3]
The dang'rous passions kept aloof,
Far from the sainted growing woof:
But near it sate ecstatic Wonder,
List'ning the deep applauding thunder:
And Truth, in sunny vest array'd,
By whose the tarsel's[4] eyes were made;
All the shad'wy tribes of Mind,
In braided dance their murmurs join'd,
And all the bright uncounted Pow'rs
Who feed on Heav'n's ambrosial flow'rs.
Where is the bard, whose soul can now
Its high presuming hopes avow?
Where he who thinks, with rapture blind,
This hallow'd work[5] for him design'd?

III

High on some cliff, to Heav'n up-pil'd,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the valleys deep,
And holy genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,
While on its rich ambitious head,
An Eden, like his own, lies spread.
I view that oak, the fancied glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his ev'ning ear,

[1] The subject of "sate" is "he," of l. 25.
[2] the poet, who is the child of "Young Fancy" and the Creator.
[3] Life, the subject of poetry, was born with the poet. [4] the male falcon.
[5] the girdle.

From many a cloud that drop'd ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in Heav'n its native strains could hear:
On which that ancient trump he reach'd was hung;
 Thither oft his glory greeting,
 From Waller's[1] myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue,
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
 In vain—such bliss to one alone,[2]
 Of all the sons of soul was known,
 And Heav'n, and Fancy, kindred pow'rs,
 Have now o'erturn'd th' inspiring bow'rs,
Or curtain'd close such scene from ev'ry future view.

(1746)

Ode

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1746

I

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod,
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

II

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall a-while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

(1746)

[1] Edmund Waller (1606–87). [2] Milton.

Ode to Evening

If[1] ought of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, O pensive Eve, to soothe thine ear,
Like thy own brawling[2] springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

O Nymph reserv'd, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede[3] ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat,
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim born in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid compos'd,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers stealing thro' thy darkning vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow, I hail
Thy genial[4] lov'd return!

For when thy folding star arising shews
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds[5] the day,

And many a Nymph who wreaths her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,

[1] The conclusion to this conditional clause begins with l. 15.
[2] "solemn" in the edition of 1748. [3] embroidery.
[4] cheering; inspiriting.—*N.E.D.*
[5] "flow'rs" in the 1748 edition. The inner rime with the preceding line is not good.

Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.[1]

Of if[2] chill blustring winds, or driving rain,
Prevent[3] my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport,
Beneath thy ling'ring light:

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter yelling thro' the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes.

So long regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy fav'rite name![4]

(1746)

[1] The 1748 edition reads thus:

"Then lead, calm vot'ress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd pile
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cold gleam."

The near-rime of "hallow'd" of l. 30 and "fallows" of l. 31 is not pleasant. Nor is "nod," of l. 31 in the text, good. The later version sounds more "poetical," but as Garrod remarks, it is difficult to see either the meaning or the grammar of it.

[2] "But when" in the 1748 edition. [3] "Forbid" in the 1748 edition.

[4] The 1748 edition:

"So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
Thy gentle influence own,
And hymn thy fav'rite name!"

Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson[1]

To George Lyttleton, Esq., This Ode Is Inscrib'd by the Author

[*The scene of the following stanzas is suppos'd to lie on the Thames near Richmond.*]

I

In yonder grave a Druid lies
Where slowly winds the stealing wave!
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its Poet's sylvan grave!

II

In yon deep bed of whisp'ring reeds
His airy harp[2] shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds
May love thro' life the soothing shade.

III

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in Pity's ear
To hear the Woodland Pilgrim's knell.

IV

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer-wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest!

V

And oft as Ease and Health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,

[1] Thomson died August 27, 1748, at Richmond, and this poem was published in folio in June, 1749.
[2] An Æolian harp. See "The Castle of Indolence," I, st. 40–41.

The friend shall view yon whit'ning spire,[1]
And 'mid the varied landscape weep.

VI

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,
Ah! what will ev'ry dirge avail?
Or tears, which Love and Pity shed
That mourn beneath the gliding sail!

VII

Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimm'ring near?[2]
With him, sweet bard, may Fancy die,
And Joy desert the blooming year.

VIII

But thou, lorn Stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crown'd Sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

IX

And see, the fairy valleys fade,
Dun Night has veil'd the solemn view!
—Yet once again, dear parted Shade
Meek Nature's child again adieu!

X

The genial meads assign'd to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom,
Their hinds, and shepherd-girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

[1] Mrs. Barbauld remarks that Richmond church, which Collins says is the "whit'ning spire," "is not white nor a spire, nor can it be seen from the river."—Prefatory Essay to Collins's Poems, London, 1797.—*Bronson.*

[2] Mrs. Barbauld is also authority for the statement that there was no monument to Thomson in the Richmond churchyard.

XI

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes,
O! Vales, and Wild Woods, shall he say
In yonder grave Your Druid lies!

(1748–9)

An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland

CONSIDERED AS THE SUBJECT OF POETRY

I

H[OME],[1] thou return'st from Thames, whose Naiads long
Have seen thee ling'ring, with a fond delay,
Mid those soft friends, whose hearts, some future day,
Shall melt, perhaps, to hear thy tragic song.
Go, not unmindful of that cordial youth,
Whom, long endear'd, thou leav'st by Lavant's side;
Together let us wish him lasting truth,
And joy untainted, with his destin'd bride.
Go! nor regardless, while these numbers boast
My short-liv'd bliss, forget my social name;
But think far off how, on the southern coast,
I met thy friendship with an equal flame!
Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, whose ev'ry vale
Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand:
To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail;
Thou need'st but take the pencil to thy hand,
And paint what all believe who own thy genial land.

II

There must thou wake perforce thy Doric[2] quill;
'Tis Fancy's land to which thou sett'st thy feet;

[1] John Home (1722–1808), author of the tragedy, "Douglas," acted in 1756. When he went to London in 1749 he met Collins through their common acquaintance, John Barrow, the "cordial youth" of l. 5. When he returned to Scotland in the same year, Collins addressed this poem to him.

[2] rustic.

Where still, 'tis said, the fairy people meet,
 Beneath each birken shade on mead or hill.
There each trim lass that skims the milky store
 To the swart tribes[1] their creamy bowl allots;
By night they sip it round the cottage-door,
 While airy minstrels warble jocund notes.
There every herd, by sad experience, knows
 How, wing'd with fate, their elf-shot arrows fly;
When the sick ewe her summer food foregoes,
 Or, stretch'd on earth, the heart-smit heifers lie.
Such airy beings awe th' untutor'd swain:
 Nor thou, though learn'd, his homelier thoughts neglect;
Let thy sweet muse the rural faith sustain;
 These are the themes of simple, sure effect,
That add new conquests to her boundless reign,
 And fill, with double force, her heart-commanding strain.

III

Ev'n yet preserv'd, how often may'st thou hear,
 Where to the pole the Boreal mountains run,
Taught by the father to his list'ning son
 Strange lays, whose power had charm'd a Spenser's ear.
At ev'ry pause, before thy mind possest,
 Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,
With uncouth lyres, in many-coloured vest,
 Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crown'd:
Whether thou bid'st the well-taught hind repeat
 The choral dirge, that mourns some chieftain brave,
When ev'ry shrieking maid her bosom beat,
 And strew'd with choicest herbs his scented grave;
Or whether, sitting in the shepherd's shiel,[2]
 Thou hear'st some sounding tale of war's alarms;
When, at the bugle's call, with fire and steel,
 The sturdy clans pour'd forth their bony[3] swarms,
And hostile brothers met, to prove each other's arms.

IV

'Tis thine to sing, how framing hideous spells,
 In Sky's lone isle the gifted wizard seer,

[1] the brownies. [2] a shepherd's summer hut.
[3] "Brawny" in second edition.

Lodg'd in the wintry cave with ——,
 Or in the depth of Uist's[1] dark forests dwells:
How they, whose sight such dreary dreams engross,
 With their own visions oft astonish'd droop,
When o'er the wat'ry strath[2] or quaggy moss,
 They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop:
Or, if in sports, or on the festive green,
 Their —— glance some fated youth descry,
Who, now perhaps in lusty vigour seen
 And rosy health, shall soon lamented die.
For them the viewless forms of air obey;
 Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair.
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
 And heartless, oft like moody madness stare
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.

[*25 lines lost.*]

VI

What though far off, from some dark dell espied
 His glimm'ring mazes cheer th' excursive sight,
Yet turn, ye wand'rers, turn your steps aside,
 Nor trust the guidance of that faithless light;
For watchful, lurking 'mid th' unrustling reed,
 At those mirk hours the wily monster lies,
And listens oft to hear the passing steed,
 And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes,
If chance his savage wrath may some weak wretch surprise.

VII

Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest indeed!
 Whom late bewilder'd in the dank, dark fen,
Far from his flocks and smoking hamlet then!
 To that sad spot ————————————:
On him, enrag'd, the fiend, in angry mood,
 Shall never look with pity's kind concern,
But instant, furious, raise the whelming flood
 O'er its drown'd bank, forbidding all return.
Or, if he meditate his wish'd escape
 To some dim hill that seems uprising near,

[1] Uist and Sky are islands in the Hebrides. [2] a Scotch river-valley.

To his faint eye the grim and grisly shape,
In all its terrors clad, shall wild appear.
Meantime, the wat'ry surge shall around him rise,
Pour'd sudden forth from ev'ry swelling source,
What now remains but tears and hopeless sighs?
His fear-shook limbs have lost their youthly force,
And down the waves he floats, a pale and breathless corse.

VIII

For him, in vain, his anxious wife shall wait,
Or wander forth to meet him on his way;
For him, in vain, at to-fall of the day,
His babes shall linger at th' unclosing gate.
Ah, ne'er shall he return! Alone, if night
Her travell'd limbs in broken slumbers steep,
With dropping willows drest, his mournful sprite
Shall visit sad, perchance, her silent sleep:
Then he, perhaps, with moist and wat'ry hand,
Shall fondly seem to press her shudd'ring cheek,
And with his blue swoln face before her stand,
And, shiv'ring cold, these piteous accents speak:
Pursue, dear wife, thy daily toils pursue,
At dawn or dusk, industrious as before;
Nor e'er of me one hapless thought renew,
While I lie welt'ring on the ozier'd shore,
Drown'd by the Kelpie's[1] wrath, nor e'er shall aid thee more!

IX

Unbounded is thy range; with varied style
Thy muse may, like those feath'ry tribes which spring
From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
To that hoar pile which still its ruin shows:[2]
In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,

[1] a fabled water-spirit.

[2] "On the largest of the Flannan Islands, in the Hebrides, on the ruins of a chapel dedicated to St. Flannan. This is reckoned by the inhabitants of the western isles a place of uncommon sanctity. One of the Flannan Islands is termed the Isle of Pigmies; and Martin says there have been many small bones dug up there, resembling in miniature those of the human body."—Note in the *Edinburgh Transactions*.

And culls them, wond'ring, from the hallow'd ground!
Or thither where beneath the show'ry west
The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid:[1]
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest.
No slaves revere them, and no wars invade:
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
And forth the monarchs stalk with sov'reign pow'r
In pageant robes, and wreath'd with sheeny gold,
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

X

But O! o'er all, forget not Kilda's[2] race,
On whose bleak rocks, which brave the wasting tides,
Fair Nature's daughter, Virtue, yet abides.
Go, just, as they, their blameless manners trace!
Then to my ear transmit some gentle song
Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain,
Their bounded walks the rugged cliffs along,
And all their prospect but the wintry main.
With sparing temp'rance, at the needful time,
They drain the sainted spring, or, hunger-prest,
Along th' Atlantic rock undreading climb,
And of its eggs despoil the solan's nest.
Thus blest in primal innocence they live,
Suffic'd and happy with that frugal fare
Which tasteful toil and hourly danger give.
Hard is their shallow soil, and bleak and bare;
Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there!

XI

Nor need'st thou blush, that such false themes engage
Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possest;
For not alone they touch the village breast,
But fill'd in elder time th' historic page.
There Shakespeare's self, with ev'ry garland crown'd,
In musing hour, his wayward sisters found,

[1] According to Martin's "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland" (1716), there are in St. Ouran's Church, on the island of Iona, the tombs of the kings of Scotland, Ireland, and Norway.

[2] St. Kilda is the most westerly of the islands of Scotland.

And with their terrors drest the magic scene.
From them he sung, when mid his bold design,
Before the Scot afflicted and aghast,
The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line,
Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant past.
Proceed, nor quit the tales which, simply told,
Could once so well my answ'ring bosom pierce;
Proceed, in forceful sounds and colours bold
The native legends of thy land rehearse;
To such adapt thy lyre and suit thy powerful verse.

XII

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart
From sober truth, are still to nature true,
And call forth fresh delight to fancy's view,
Th' heroic muse employ'd her Tasso's art![1]
How have I trembled, when at Tancred's stroke,
Its gushing blood the gaping cypress pour'd;
When each live plant with mortal accents spoke,
And the wild blast up-heav'd the vanish'd sword!
How have I sat, when pip'd the pensive wind,
To hear his harp, by British Fairfax strung.
Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
Believ'd the magic wonders which he sung!
Hence at each sound imagination glows;
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows;
Melting it flows, pure, num'rous, strong and clear,
And fills th' impassion'd heart, and wins th' harmonious ear.

XIII

All hail, ye scenes that o'er my soul prevail,
Ye———friths and lakes which, far away,
Are by smooth Annan fill'd, or past'ral Tay,
Or Don's romantic springs, at distance, hail!
The time shall come when I, perhaps, may tread
Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading broom,
Or o'er your stretching heaths by fancy led:
Then will I dress once more the faded bow'r,

[1] Torquato Tasso (1544–95) wrote "Jerusalem Delivered," which was translated into English verse by Edward Fairfax in 1600. The adventure of Tancred mentioned here is contained in Book xiii, stanzas 41–3, 46.

Where Johnson sat in Drummond's———shade;[1]
Or crop from Tiviots dale each-
And mourn on Yarrow's banks-
Meantime, ye pow'rs, that on the plains which bore
The cordial youth, on Lothian's plains[2] attend,
Where'er he dwell, on hill, or lowly muir,
To him I lose, your kind protection lend,
And, touch'd with love like mine, preserve my absent friend.

(c. 1749; publ. 1788)

[1] Ben Jonson visited William Drummond of Hawthornden in 1618–19.
[2] Edinburgh is in County Lothian.

Adam Skirving

1719–1803

ADAM SKIRVING was born in Haddington, Scotland, in 1719, and was educated at Preston Kirk. He lived most of his life as a farmer. He was also a Jacobite. He apparently was a spectator at the battle of Prestonpans, but took no part in it. His "Johnnie Cope" was written on that occasion (1745) to a tune then familiar to his contemporaries. This and a similar ballad on Prestonpans are all that survive of the songs he wrote for local entertainment. He died in April, 1803, and is buried in the churchyard of Athelstaneford, where his tombstone commemorates his local reputation as a wit and an athlete.

Johnnie Cope[1]

COPE sent a challenge frae Dunbar:—
Charlie, meet me an ye daur,[2]
And I'll learn you the art o' war,
If you'll meet wi' me i' the morning.

Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were wauking, I wad wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

When Charlie looked the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from:
Come follow me, my merry, merry men,
And we'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning.

Now, Johnnie, be as good's your word,
Come let us try both fire and sword;

[1] Sir John Cope (d. 1760), commander of the English forces against the Jacobite insurgents under Prince Charles, was defeated at Prestonpans on September 21, 1745.

[2] dare.

And dinna flee away like a frighted bird,
That's chased from its nest in the morning.

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss,
To ha'e a horse in readiness,
To flee awa' in the morning.

Fy now, Johnnie, get up and rin,
The Highland bagpipes mak' a din;
It is best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 'twill be bluidy in the morning.

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,
They speer'd[1] at him, Where's a' your men?
"The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning."

Now, Johnnie, troth ye are na blate,[2]
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
Sae early in the morning.

"O! faith," quo' Johnnie, "I got sic flegs[3]
Wi' their claymores and philabegs;[4]
If I face them again, deil break my legs—
So I wish you a' gude morning."

(1745)

[1] asked. [2] shy. [3] I was so frightened. [4] filibegs; kilts.

William Whitehead

1715–1785

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, the son of a baker to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, was born in the university town and baptized on February 12, 1715. He was nominated to Winchester College, where he remained until 1735, when he became a sizar at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and was given a small scholarship open to orphan sons of tradesmen of the town. He received his bachelor's degree in 1739, was elected fellow of his college in 1742, and the next year was given his M.A. In 1745 he became tutor to Viscount Villiers, son of the Earl of Jersey; he moved to London and resigned his fellowship. Meanwhile he was writing verses, including in 1741 an epistle "On the Danger of Writing in Verse" and another poem in heroic couplets entitled "Atys and Adrastus." In 1750 Garrick produced at Drury Lane his "Roman Father," and four years later, "Creusa, Queen of Athens." In 1757, after the death of Cibber, he was made Poet Laureate—Gray having refused the honor. He proceeded to write odes for royal birthdays and other special occasions with the unfailing loyalty of a dutiful laureate, so that Churchill spoke of him as "Dulness and Method's darling son." Whitehead defended himself in a "Charge to the Poets" (1762), a sort of sequel to his "Danger of Writing in Verse" and a good-natured apology for his conduct. In 1774 he collected his plays and poems in two volumes. The next year, on April 14, he died in London.

EDITIONS

Anderson: "British Poets," Vol. II. 1795.
Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. XVII. 1810.

The Je ne sçai quoi

A Song

YES, I'm in love, I feel it now,
And Cælia has undone me;
And yet I'll swear I can't tell how
The pleasing plague stole on me.

'Tis not her face which love creates,
For there no Graces revel;
'Tis not her shape, for there the Fates
Have rather been uncivil.

'Tis not her air, for sure in that
There's nothing more than common;
And all her sense is only chat,
Like any other woman.

Her voice, her touch might give th' alarm—
'Twas both perhaps, or neither;
In short, 'twas that provoking charm
Of Cælia all together.

(1746)

The Enthusiast

Once, I remember well the day,
'Twas ere the blooming sweets of May
 Had lost their freshest hues,
When every flower on every hill,
In every vale, had drank its fill
 Of sunshine, and of dews.

'Twas that sweet season's loveliest prime
When Spring gives up the reins of time
 To Summer's glowing hand,
And doubting mortals hardly know
By whose command the breezes blow
 Which fan the smiling land.

'Twas then beside a greenwood shade
Which cloth'd a lawn's aspiring head,
 I urg'd my devious way,
With loit'ring steps, regardless where,
So soft, so genial was the air,
 So wondrous bright the day.

And now my eyes with transport rove
O'er all the blue expanse above,

Unbroken by a cloud!
And now beneath delighted pass,
Where winding through the deep-green grass
A full-brim'd river flow'd.

I stop, I gaze; in accents rude,
To thee, serenest Solitude,
Bursts forth th' unbidden lay;
"Begone vile world! the learn'd, the wise,
The great, the busy, I despise,
And pity ev'n the gay.

"These, these, are joys alone," I cry,
"'Tis here, divine Philosophy,
Thou deign'st to fix thy throne!
Here Contemplation points the road
Through nature's charms to nature's God!
These, these, are joys alone!

"Adieu, ye vain low-thoughted cares,
Ye human hopes, and human fears,
Ye pleasures, and ye pains!"—
While thus I spake, o'er all my soul
A philosophic calmness stole,
A stoic stillness reigns.

The tyrant passions all subside,
Fear, anger, pity, shame, and pride,
No more my bosom move;
Yet still I felt, or seem'd to feel
A kind of visionary zeal
Of universal love.

When lo! a voice! a voice I hear!
'Twas Reason whisper'd in my ear
These monitory strains:
"What mean'st thou, man? wouldst thou unbind
The ties which constitute thy kind,
The pleasures and the pains?

"The same Almighty Power unseen,
Who spreads the gay or solemn scene

To Contemplation's eye,
Fix'd every movement of the soul,
Taught every wish its destin'd goal,
And quicken'd every joy.

"He bids the tyrant passions rage,
He bids them war eternal wage,
And combat each his foe:
Till from dissensions concords rise,
And beauties from deformities,
And happiness from woe.

"Art thou not man? and dar'st thou find
A bliss which leans not to mankind?
Presumptuous thought and vain!
Each bliss unshar'd is unenjoy'd,
Each power is weak, unless employ'd
Some social good to gain.

"Shall light, and shade, and warmth, and air,
With those exalted joys compare
Which active Virtue feels,
When on she drags, as lawful prize,
Contempt, and Indolence, and Vice,
At her triumphant wheels?

"As rest to labour still succeeds,
To man, whilst Virtue's glorious deeds
Employ his toilsome day,
This fair variety of things
Are merely life's refreshing springs,
To soothe him on his way.

"Enthusiast go, unstring thy lyre;
In vain thou sing'st, if none admire,
How sweet soe'er the strain.
And is not thy o'erflowing mind,
Unless thou mixest with thy kind,
Benevolent in vain?

"Enthusiast, go; try every sense:
If not thy bliss, thy excellence,
 Thou yet hast learn'd to scan;
At least thy wants, thy weakness know;
And see them all uniting show
 That man was made for man."

(1754)

William Mason

1725–1797

WILLIAM MASON, the son of the vicar of Holy Trinity, Kingston-upon-Hull, was born on February 23, 1725. On July 1, 1742, he was admitted as a pensioner at St. John's College, Cambridge, and took his B.A. in 1746. In 1747 he was elected to a fellowship in Pembroke, but did not come into it until 1749, in which year he was given his Master's degree. He published "Isis," which denounced the Jacobitism of Oxford and which Thomas Warton answered with his "Triumph of Isis"; and he wrote an ode on the installation of the Duke of Newcastle as chancellor. In 1751, he became acquainted with Horace Walpole. The next year he published a play, "Elfrida." His father's death in 1753 threw him upon his own resources. The church was his refuge, and he was ordained deacon and priest in November, 1754, and instituted rector at Aston, Yorks, through the good offices of the Earl of Holderness, to whom he was also chaplain. In 1755 he was made chaplain to Lord Hertford's embassy to Germany for a month or so. In the following year he brought out a small volume of odes. In 1757 he was appointed chaplain-in-ordinary to George II and two years later resigned his Pembroke fellowship. Then he published his play "Caractacus," which was soon followed by two editions. In 1761 he was made chaplain to George III, and the next year Canon Residentiary of York. He published his "Elegies" in 1762, his "Poems" in 1764, and "Œdipus," by Whitehead and himself, in 1765. Mason was one of Gray's executors, and in 1775 he published the "Memoirs of Gray." The first book of "The English Garden" came out in 1772, the second in 1777, the third in 1779, and the fourth in 1781. In 1772 "Elfrida" was first performed, without Mason's consent. In 1776 "Caractacus" had fourteen performances. On the death of the Earl of Holderness in 1778, he lost the chaplaincy. In 1783 "The English Garden" was published in its complete form. In 1794 he wrote his "Palinodia," a poem directed against democracy. Three years later, on April 7, 1797, he died at Aston. A monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey, close to Gray's.

EDITIONS

Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. XVIII. 1810.
Works of William Mason. 4 vols. 1811.
S. W. Singer: "British Poets," Vols. LXXVII, LXXVIII. 1822.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Dobson, A.: "At Prior Park." 1912.
Draper, J. W.: "William Mason: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Culture." With a full bibliography. 1924.

Ode to a Friend

AH! CEASE this kind persuasive strain,
Which, when it flows from friendship's tongue,
However weak, however vain,
O'erpowers beyond the siren's song:
Leave me, my friend, indulgent go,
And let me muse upon my woe.
Why lure me from these pale retreats?
Why rob me of these pensive sweets?
Can Music's voice, can Beauty's eye,
Can Painting's glowing hand supply
A charm so suited to my mind,
As blows this hollow gust of wind,
As drops this little weeping rill
Soft tinkling down the moss-grown hill,
While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners grey?

Say, from Affliction's various source
Do none but turbid waters flow?
And cannot Fancy clear their course?
For Fancy is the friend of Woe.
Say, mid that grove, in love-lorn state,
While yon poor ringdove mourns her mate,
Is all, that meets the shepherd's ear,
Inspir'd by anguish, and despair?
Ah no, fair Fancy rules the song:
She swells her throat; she guides her tongue;
She bids the waving aspen spray
Quiver a cadence to her lay;
She bids the fringed osiers bow,
And rustle round the lake below,
To suit the tenor of her gurgling sighs,
And soothe her throbbing breast with solemn sympathies.

To thee, whose young and polish'd brow
The wrinkling hand of Sorrow spares;
Whose cheeks, bestrew'd with roses, know
No channel for the tide of tears;
To thee yon abbey dank, and lone,
Where ivy chains each mould'ring stone
That nods o'er many a martyr's tomb,
May cast a formidable gloom.
Yet some there are, who, free from fear,
Could wander through the cloisters drear,
Could rove each desolated isle,
Though midnight thunders shook the pile;
And dauntless view, or seem to view,
(As faintly flash the lightnings blue)
Thin shiv'ring ghosts from yawning charnels throng,
And glance with silent sweep the shaggy vaults along.

But such terrific charms as these,
I ask not yet: my sober mind
The fainter forms of sadness please;
My sorrows are of softer kind.
Through this still valley let me stray,
Rapt in some strain of pensive Gray:
Whose lofty genius bears along
The conscious dignity of song;
And, scorning from the sacred store
To waste a note on pride, or power,
Roves through the glimmering, twilight gloom,
And warbles round each rustic tomb:
He, too, perchance (for well I know,
His heart can melt with friendly woe)
He, too, perchance, when these poor limbs are laid,
Will heave one tuneful sigh, and soothe my hov'ring shade.

(1746)

Samuel Johnson

1709–1784

SAMUEL JOHNSON, the son of a bookseller, was born in Lichfield on September 18, 1709. In 1728 he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, but was not in residence beyond December, 1729, except for a week or two in 1730. For the following five or six years he had no settled occupation; he taught school at Bosworth and Edial and tried his hand at writing. In 1735, with no prospects, he married Mrs. Porter, a widow of forty-eight, and as a forlorn hope he opened a school at Lichfield. That soon failed him, and in 1737 he went up to London with Garrick and settled there. He got a job as a hack writer on Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine* and published his "London" in 1738. In 1740 he began writing parliamentary debates as "Reports of the Debates in the Senate of Lilliput" for Cave's magazine. In 1744 he brought out "An Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage," and three years later wrote the "Prologue on the Opening of Drury Lane Theatre"; in the same year (1747) he addressed his "Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language" to the Earl of Chesterfield. In 1748 his "Vanity of Human Wishes" was published, and his "Irene" was produced at Drury Lane by Garrick. The first *Rambler* came from his pen on March 20, 1750, and the periodical continued for almost exactly two years.

The death of his wife in 1752 put an end to what was, contrary to the predictions of the wiseacres, a very happy marriage. In 1753 he was writing the *Adventurer*. Three events stand out in 1755: he wrote his famous letter to the Earl of Chesterfield; he brought out his Dictionary; and he was given the degree of M.A. by the University of Oxford. The next year he published his "Proposals" for an edition of Shakspere. From 1758 to 1760 he was writing *The Idler*. In 1759 his mother died; then "Rasselas" appeared. He received a pension from the crown worth £300 a year in 1762. The year following, he met his future biographer Boswell. In 1764 he and Joshua Reynolds founded the Literary Club, election to which was to be a mark of Johnson's personal esteem. His edition of Shakspere came out at last in 1765, not without prodding by Churchill and other "kind" friends. He showed his friendship for Boswell, as well as his bravery, by visiting the Hebrides in 1773, when he was sixty-four years old. In the following year he published an account of the tour, called "A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."

In 1775 he brought out "Taxation No Tyranny" in defense of England's policy in America, and was given the degree of LL.D. by Oxford. He began his "Lives of the Poets" in 1777 and completed them in 1781. In 1783 a stroke of paralysis led to a long illness, which terminated in his death on December 13, 1784.

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London: A Poem

IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE OF JUVENAL

—Quis iniquæ
Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?[1]—JUV. I, 30, 1.

THOUGH grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injur'd Thales[2] bids the town farewell,
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice commend,
I praise the hermit, but regret the friend,
Resolv'd at length, from vice and London far,
To breathe in distant fields a purer air,
And, fix'd on Cambria's solitary shore,
Give to St. David one true Briton more.[3]
For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land
Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
There none are swept by sudden fate away,
But all whom hunger spares, with age decay:
Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
And now a rabble rages, now a fire;
Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay,
And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
Here falling houses thunder on your head,
And here a female atheist talks you dead.
While Thales waits the wherry that contains
Of dissipated wealth the small remains,
On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood;
Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth,[4]
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth;
In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew,
And call Britannia's glories back to view;
Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain,
Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,[5]

[1] "Who is so tolerant of this wicked city, who so steeled as to restrain himself?"

[2] Probably Johnson's friend, Richard Savage—who, however, did not leave for Wales till fifteen months later.

[3] Cambria is Wales; St. David is its patron saint.

[4] Queen Elizabeth was born at Greenwich.

[5] a duty charged on home goods.

Or English honour grew a standing jest.
A transient calm the happy scenes bestow,
And for a moment lull the sense of woe.
At length awaking, with contemptuous frown,
Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town.
Since worth, he cries, in these degen'rate days
Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise;
In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science[1] toils in vain;
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,
And ev'ry moment leaves my little less;
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,
And life still vig'rous revels in my veins;
Grant me, kind heaven, to find some happier place,
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,
Some peaceful vale with nature's paintings gay;
Where once the harass'd Briton[2] found repose,
And safe in poverty defy'd his foes;
Some secret cell, ye pow'rs, indulgent give.
Let —— live here, for —— has learn'd to live,
Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates[3] in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth,
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.
Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
Collect a tax, or farm a lottery;
With warbling eunuchs fill a licens'd stage,[4]
And lull to servitude a thoughtless age.
Heroes, proceed! what bounds your pride shall hold?
What check restrain your thirst of pow'r and gold?
Behold rebellious virtue quite o'erthrown,
Behold our fame, our wealth, our lives your own.
To such, the plunder of a land is giv'n,

[1] learning. [2] a Celt.

[3] Spaniards. They were called pirates by Johnson because they insisted on searching English ships for contraband and sometimes were too rough in their treatment of English sailors.

[4] The Licensing Act of 1737 was intended to protect the government from attacks by the stage. The 1788 edition has "silenc'd stage."

When public crimes inflame the wrath of Heav'n;
But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
Who start at theft, and blush at perjury?
Who scarce forbear, though Britain's court he sing,
To pluck a titled poet's borrow'd wing;[1]
A statesman's logic unconvinc'd can hear,
And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;[2]
Despise a fool in half his pension dress'd,
And strive in vain to laugh at Clodio's jest.
 Others with softer smiles, and subtler art,
Can sap the principles, or taint the heart;
With more address a lover's note convey,
Or bribe a virgin's innocence away.
Well may they rise, while I, whose rustic tongue
Ne'er knew to puzzle right, or varnish wrong,
Spurn'd as a beggar, dreaded as a spy,
Live unregarded, unlamented die.
 For what but social guilt the friend endears?
Who shares Orgilio's crimes, his fortune shares.
But thou, should tempting villainy present
All Marlb'rough[3] hoarded, or all Villiers[4] spent,
Turn from the glitt'ring bribe thy scornful eye,
Nor sell for gold, what gold could never buy,
The peaceful slumber, self-approving day,
Unsullied fame, and conscience ever gay.
 The cheated nation's happy fav'rites, see!
Mark whom the great caress, who frown on me!
London! the needy villain's gen'ral home,
The common sewer of Paris, and of Rome;
With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a French metropolis.

[1] "Savage called himself 'Volunteer Laureate,' and by so doing irritated Colley Cibber, the real Laureate, who protested; but Savage remarked that he did not think any title which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity."—*Johnson's "Life of Savage."*

[2] the Court newspaper, *The Gazette.*

[3] John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722).

[4] George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628), favorite of James I and Charles I.

Illustrious Edward![1] from the realms of day,
The land of heroes and of saints survey;
Nor hope the British lineaments to trace,
The rustic grandeur, or the surly grace,
But lost in thoughtless ease, and empty show,
Behold the warrior dwindled to a beau;
Sense, freedom, piety, refin'd away,
Of France the mimic, and of Spain the prey.
All that at home no more can beg or steal,
Or like a gibbet better than a wheel;
Hiss'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
Their air, their dress, their politics import;
Obsequious, artful, voluble and gay,
On Britain's fond credulity they prey.
No gainful trade their industry can 'scape,
They sing, they dance, clean shoes, or cure a clap:
All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,
And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.
Ah! what avails it, that, from slav'ry far,
I drew the breath of life in English air;
Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lisp the tale of Henry's[2] victories;
If the gull'd conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery prevails when arms are vain?
Studious to please, and ready to submit,
The supple Gaul was born a parasite:
Still to his int'rest true, where'er he goes,
Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;
In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,
From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.
These arts in vain our rugged natives try,
Strain out with falt'ring diffidence a lie,
And get a kick for awkward flattery.
Besides, with justice, this discerning age
Admires their wond'rous talents for the stage:
Well may they venture on the mimic's art,
Who play from morn to night a borrow'd part;
Practis'd their master's notions to embrace,
Repeat his maxims, and reflect his face;
With ev'ry wild absurdity comply,

[1] Edward III reigned 1327–77. [2] Henry V reigned 1415–22.

And view each object with another's eye;
To shake with laughter ere the jest they hear,
To pour at will the counterfeited tear;
And as their patron hints the cold or heat,
To shake in dog-days, in December sweat.
How, when competitors like these contend,
Can surly virtue hope to fix a friend?
Slaves that with serious impudence beguile,
And lie without a blush, without a smile;
Exalt each trifle, ev'ry vice adore,
Your taste in snuff, your judgment in a whore;
Can Balbo's eloquence applaud, and swear
He gropes[1] his breeches with a monarch's air.
For arts like these preferr'd, admir'd, caress'd,
They first invade your table, then your breast;
Explore your secrets with insidious art,
Watch the weak hour, and ransack all the heart;
Then soon your ill-plac'd confidence repay,
Commence your lords, and govern or betray.
By numbers here from shame or censure free,
All crimes are safe but hated poverty.
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
This, only this, provokes the snarling muse.
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak,
Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;
With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,
And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
Of all the griefs that harass the distress'd,
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.
Has Heav'n reserv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?
Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,
And bear Oppression's insolence no more.
This mournful truth is ev'rywhere confess'd,
Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd:
But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,

[1] grasps.

Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold;
Where won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
The groom retails the favours of his lord.
 But hark! th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
Roll through the streets, and thunder to the skies:
Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and pow'r,
Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r,
Aghast you start, and scarce with aching sight
Sustain th' approaching fire's tremendous light;
Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,
And leave your little all to flames a prey;
Then through the world a wretched vagrant roam,
For where can starving merit find a home?
In vain your mournful narrative disclose,
While all neglect, and most insult your woes.
Should Heav'n's just bolts Orgilio's wealth confound,
And spread his flaming palace on the ground,
Swift o'er the land the dismal rumour flies,
And public mournings pacify the skies;
The laureate tribe in venal verse relate,
How virtue wars with persecuting fate;
With well-feign'd gratitude the pension'd band
Refund the plunder of the beggar'd land.
See! while he builds, the gaudy vassals come,
And crowd with sudden wealth the rising dome;
The price of boroughs and of souls restore;
And raise his treasures higher than before:
Now bless'd with all the baubles of the great,
The polish'd marble, and the shining plate,
Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,
And hopes from angry Heav'n another fire.
 Could'st thou resign the park and play content,
For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;
There might'st thou find some elegant retreat,
Some hireling senator's deserted seat;
And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand;
There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flow'rs,
Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs;
And, while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,
Despise the dainties of a venal lord:

There ev'ry bush with Nature's music rings,
There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings;
On all thy hours security shall smile,
And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.
Prepare for death if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
Yet ev'n these heroes, mischievously gay,
Lords of the street, and terrors of the way;
Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach.
In vain these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose;
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest,
And leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast.
Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye senatorian band,
Whose ways and means support the sinking land;
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
To rig another convoy for the king.[1]
A single gaol, in Alfred's golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair Justice then, without constraint ador'd,
Held high the steady scale, but sheath'd the sword;
No spies were paid, no special juries known,
Blest age! but ah! how diff'rent from our own!
Much could I add,—but see the boat at hand,
The tide retiring, calls me from the land:
Farewell!—When youth, and health, and fortune spent,
Thou fly'st for refuge to the wilds of Kent;
And, tir'd like me with follies and with crimes,
In angry numbers warn'st succeeding times;

[1] The reference is to the frequent vists of George II to Hanover.

Then shall thy friend, nor thou refuse his aid,
Still foe to vice, forsake his Cambrian shade;
In virtue's cause once more exert his rage,
Thy satire point, and animate thy page.

(1738)

Prologue

SPOKEN BY MR. GARRICK AT THE OPENING OF THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE, 1747

WHEN Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose;
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.
His pow'rful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,
And unresisted Passion storm'd the breast.
Then Jonson[1] came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule;
His studious patience and laborious art,
By regular approach essay'd the heart:
Cold Approbation gave the ling'ring bays;
For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the gen'ral doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.
The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wish'd for Jonson's art, or Shakespeare's flame.
Themselves they studied; as they felt, they writ:
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetic friend;
They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend.
Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,
And proudly hop'd to pimp in future days.
Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong,
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long:
Till Shame regain'd the post that Sense betray'd,
And Virtue call'd Oblivion to her aid.

[1] Ben Jonson (c. 1573–1637).

Then, crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
For years the pow'r of tragedy declin'd;
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roar'd whilst Passion slept;
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remain'd though Nature fled.
But forc'd, at length, her ancient reign to quit,
She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit;
Exulting Folly hail'd the joyful day,
And Pantomime and Song confirm'd her sway.
But who the coming changes can presage,
And mark the future periods of the stage?
Perhaps if skill could distant times explore,
New Behns, new Durfeys,[1] yet remain in store;
Perhaps where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet dy'd,
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride;
Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance)
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet[2] may dance.
Hard is his lot that here by fortune plac'd,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
With ev'ry meteor of caprice must play,
And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day.
Ah! let not censure term our fate our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice;
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live.
Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;
'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense;
To chase the charms of Sound, the pomp of Show,
For useful Mirth and salutary Woe;
Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

(1747)

[1] Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640–89), a novelist and dramatist of somewhat doubtful reputation. Tom Durfey (1653–1723), a writer of plays and poems.
[2] Edward Hunt was a light-weight pugilist, and Mahomet a rope-dancer, among contemporary "attractions."

The Vanity of Human Wishes

IN IMITATION OF THE TENTH SATIRE OF JUVENAL

LET observation with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say how hope and fear, desire and hate,
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
Where wav'ring man, betray'd by vent'rous pride,
To tread the dreary paths without a guide;
As treach'rous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good.
How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice,
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppress'd,
When Vengeance listens to the fool's request.
Fate wings with ev'ry wish th' afflictive dart,
Each gift of nature, and each grace of art,
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows,
Impeachment stops the speaker's pow'rful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death.

But scarce observ'd the knowing and the bold,
Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold;
Wide-wasting pest! that rages unconfin'd,
And crowds with crimes the records of mankind,
For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws,
For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws;
Wealth heap'd on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys,
The dangers gather as the treasures rise.

Let Hist'ry tell where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the madded land,
When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
How much more safe the vassal than the lord,
Low skulks the hind beneath the rage of pow'r,
And leaves the wealthy[1] traitor in the Tow'r,

[1] "Bonny" in the first edition, reflecting Johnson's sympathy for the supporters of the Young Pretender, "bonny Prince Charley," who was defeated at Culloden in 1746.

Untouch'd his cottage, and his slumbers sound,
Though confiscation's vultures hover round.
The needy traveller, serene and gay,
Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
Does envy seize thee? crush th' upbraiding joy,
Increase his riches and his peace destroy,
New fears in dire vicissitude invade,
The rustling brake alarms, and quiv'ring shade,
Nor light nor darkness bring his pain relief,
One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.
Yet still one gen'ral cry the skies assails,
And gain and grandeur load the tainted[1] gales;
Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir.[2]
Once more, Democritus,[3] arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth,
See motley life in modern trappings dress'd,
And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest:
Thou who couldst laugh where want enchain'd caprice,
Toil crush'd conceit, and man was of a piece;
Where wealth unlov'd without a mourner dy'd;
And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride;
Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unwieldy state;
Where change of fav'rites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judg'd a cause;
How wouldst thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe?
Attentive truth and nature to descry,
And pierce each scene with philosophic eye.
To thee were solemn toys or empty show,
The robes of pleasure and the veils of woe:
All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,
Whose joys are causeless, or whose griefs are vain.
Such was the scorn that fill'd the sage's mind,
Renew'd at ev'ry glance on humankind;
How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,

[1] *scented.*
[2] Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was on bad terms with his father, George II, and was in 1737 forbidden the Court. His father survived him nine years.
[3] "The laughing philosopher," who lived in the fifth century B.C.

Search ev'ry state, and canvass ev'ry pray'r.
Unnumber'd suppliants crowd Preferment's gate,
Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;
Delusive Fortune hears th' incessant call,
They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
On ev'ry stage the foes of peace attend,
Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.
Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door
Pours in the morning worshipper no more;
For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,
To growing wealth the dedicator flies,
From ev'ry room descends the painted face,
That hung the bright palladium of the place,
And smok'd in kitchens, or in auctions sold,
To better features yields the frame of gold;
For now no more we trace in ev'ry line
Heroic worth, benevolence divine:
The form distorted justifies the fall,
And detestation rids th' indignant wall.
But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
Sign her foe's doom, or guard her fav'rite's zeal?
Through Freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
Degrading nobles and controlling kings;
Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
And ask no questions but the price of votes;
With weekly libels and septennial ale,[1]
Their wish is full to riot and to rail.
In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey[2] stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their pow'rs consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows:
Still to new heights his restless wishes tow'r,
Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r;
Till conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,
And rights submitted, left him none to seize.
At length his sov'reign frowns—the train of state

[1] The ale dispensed at elections. The Septennial Act of 1716 limited Parliament to a maximum duration of seven years.

[2] Cardinal Wolsey (1475?–1530), who rose to great power in church and state under Henry VIII and had as great a fall.

Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
Where'er he turns he meets a stranger's eye,
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly;
At once is lost the pride of awful state,
The golden canopy, the glitt'ring plate,
The regal palace, the luxurious board,
The liv'ried army, and the menial lord.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.
Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end be thine?
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
The wisest justice on the banks of Trent?
For why did Wolsey near the steeps of fate,
On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight?
Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin to the gulfs below?
What gave great Villiers[1] to th' assassin's knife,
And fix'd disease on Harley's[2] closing life?
What murder'd Wentworth,[3] and what exil'd Hyde,[4]
By kings protected and to kings ally'd?
What but their wish indulg'd in courts to shine,
And pow'r too great to keep or to resign?
When first the college rolls receive his name,
The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
Through all his veins the fever of renown
Spreads from the strong contagion of the gown;
O'er Bodley's dome[5] his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.[6]

[1] George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, assassinated in 1628.
[2] Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1661–1724), leader of the Tories (1710–12), later impeached and driven from Court, 1717.
[3] Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (1593–1641), minister of Charles I in his struggle with the Puritans and executed with the frightened consent of the King.
[4] Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), minister to Charles II till 1667, when through the opposition of Parliament he fell, and fled to France. His daughter married the Duke of York, later James II.
[5] The Bodleian Library. "Dome" is merely a building.
[6] The tradition was that Friar Bacon's study, which was built on an arch over the bridge, would fall when any one greater than Bacon should pass under it.

Are these thy views? proceed, illustrious youth,
And Virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!
Yet should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;
Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
And pour on misty Doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;
Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron,[1] and the gaol.
See nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Here Lydiat's life, and Galileo's, end.[2]
 Nor deem, when Learning her last prize bestows,
The glitt'ring eminence exempt from foes;
See when the vulgar 'scape, despis'd or aw'd,
Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud.[3]
From meaner minds, though smaller fines content
The plunder'd palace, or sequester'd rent;
Mark'd out by dangerous parts he meets the shock,
And fatal Learning leads him to the block:
Around his tomb let Art and Genius weep,

[1] "Garret" in the first edition. The famous letter to Chesterfield was written in the February preceding the publication of the revised edition of this poem.

[2] Thomas Lydiat (1572–1646), an Oxford scholar who was imprisoned for debt and died in misery. Galileo (1564–1642) was a prisoner of the Inquisition in his later years because of his scientific beliefs.

[3] Archbishop Laud (1573–1644), a patron of learning rather than a scholar. With Strafford he was a victim of the Puritan opposition to Charles I and was sent to the block in 1644.

But hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.
The festal blazes, the triumphal show,
The ravish'd standard, and the captive foe,
The senate's thanks, the gazette's pompous tale,
With force resistless o'er the brave prevail.
Such bribes the rapid Greek[1] o'er Asia whirl'd,
For such the steady Romans shook the world;
For such in distant lands the Britons shine,
And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine;
This pow'r has praise, that virtue scarce can warm,
Till fame supplies the universal charm.
Yet Reason frowns on War's unequal game,
Where wasted nations raise a single name,
And mortgag'd states their grandsires' wreaths regret
From age to age in everlasting debt;
Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey
To rust on medals, or on stones decay.
On what foundation stands the warrior's pride?
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles[2] decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'rs combine,
And one capitulate,[3] and one resign;[4]
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
"Think nothing gain'd," he cries, "till nought remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic[5] standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky."
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost;
He comes, not want and cold his course delay;—
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day:[6]

[1] Alexander the Great. [2] Charles XII of Sweden (1682–1718).
[3] Frederick IV, King of Denmark from 1699 to 1730.
[4] Augustus II of Poland (1670–1733), king from 1697 to 1702 and from 1709 to 1733.
[5] Germanic; Swedish. [6] July 8, 1709.

The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.

All times their scenes of pompous woes afford,
From Persia's tyrant to Bavaria's lord.
In gay hostility, and barb'rous pride,
With half mankind embattled at his side,
Great Xerxes[1] comes to seize the certain prey,
And starves exhausted regions in his way;
Attendant Flatt'ry counts his myriads o'er,
Till counted myriads soothe his pride no more;
Fresh praise is tried till madness fires his mind,
The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind;[2]
New pow'rs are claim'd, new pow'rs are still bestow'd,
Till rude resistance lops the spreading god;
The daring Greeks deride the martial show,
And heap their valleys with the gaudy foe;[3]
Th' insulted sea with humbler thought he gains,
A single skiff to speed his flight remains;
Th' incumber'd oar scarce leaves the dreaded coast
Through purple billows and a floating host.

The bold Bavarian,[4] in a luckless hour,
Tries the dread summits of Cæsarean pow'r,
With unexpected legions bursts away,
And sees defenseless realms receive his sway;

[1] Xerxes, King of Persia from 485 to 465 B.C.

[2] A variation of Herodotus's story that Xerxes lashed the Hellespont and let down a pair of fetters into the sea because his bridge across the Hellespont was destroyed.

[3] As Leonidas and his Spartans did against the Persians at Thermopylæ.

[4] Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria (1697–1745), on the death of Emperor Charles VI in 1740 sought the succession and involved Europe in the War of the Austrian Succession. He was opposed by Maria Theresa, Queen of Hungary, and though he was crowned Emperor, he soon died, a broken man.

Short sway! fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;
The fierce Croatian, and the wild Hussar,[1]
With all the sons of ravage crowd the war;
The baffled prince, in honour's flatt'ring bloom
Of hasty greatness finds the fatal doom,
His foes' derision, and his subjects' blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame.
 Enlarge my life with multitude of days,
In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays;
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know,
That life protracted is protracted woe.
Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy:
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flow'r,
With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
He views, and wonders that they please no more;
Now pall the tasteless meats, and joyless wines,
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain:
No sounds alas would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witness'd Orpheus near;
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend,
Nor sweeter music of a virtuous friend,
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave, or positively wrong.
The still returning tale, and ling'ring jest,
Perplex the fawning niece and pamper'd guest,
While growing hopes scarce awe the gath'ring sneer,
And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear;
The watchful guests still hint the last offense,
The daughter's petulance, the son's expense,
Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,
And mould his passions till they make his will.
 Unnumber'd maladies his joints invade,
Lay siege to life and press the dire blockade;

[1] light Hungarian cavalry.

But unextinguish'd Av'rice still remains,
And dreaded losses aggravate his pains;
He turns, with anxious heart and crippled hands,
His bonds of debt, and mortgages of lands;
Or views his coffers with suspicious eyes,
Unlocks his gold, and counts it till he dies.

But grant, the virtues of a temp'rate prime
Bless with an age exempt from scorn or crime;
An age that melts with unperceiv'd decay,
And glides in modest innocence away;
Whose peaceful day Benevolence endears,
Whose night congratulating Conscience cheers;
The gen'ral fav'rite as the gen'ral friend:
Such age there is, and who shall wish its end?

Yet ev'n on this her load Misfortune flings,
To press the weary minutes' flagging wings:
New sorrow rises as the day returns,
A sister sickens, or a daughter mourns.
Now kindred Merit fills the sable bier,
Now lacerated Friendship claims a tear.
Year chases year, decay pursues decay,
Still drops some joy from with'ring life away;
New forms arise, and diff'rent views engage,
Superfluous lags the vet'ran on the stage,
Till pitying Nature signs the last release,
And bids afflicted worth retire to peace.

But few there are whom hours like these await,
Who set unclouded in the gulfs of fate.
From Lydia's monarch[1] should the search descend,
By Solon caution'd to regard his end,
In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise?
From Marlb'rough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show.[2]

The teeming mother anxious for her race,
Begs for each birth the fortune of a face:

[1] Crœsus, the fabulously wealthy King of Lydia, was told by Solon, the wise man of Athens, to "call no man happy until he is dead."

[2] Marlborough had two paralytic strokes and was "reduced to a state of absolute debility." (Coxe's "Memoirs.") Swift sank into complete idiocy and, it was said, was so exhibited by his servants.

Yet Vane[1] could tell what ills from beauty spring;
And Sedley[2] curs'd the form that pleas'd a king.
Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
Whom Pleasure keeps too busy to be wise,
Whom joys with soft varieties invite
By day the frolic, and the dance by night;
Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
And ask the latest fashion of the heart,
What care, what rules your heedless charms shall save,
Each nymph your rival, and each youth your slave?
Against your fame with fondness hate combines,
The rival batters, and the lover mines.
With distant voice neglected Virtue calls,
Less heard, and less the faint remonstrance falls;
Tir'd with contempt, she quits the slipp'ry reign,
And Pride and Prudence take her seat in vain.
In crowd at once, where none the pass defend,
The harmless freedom, and the private friend.
The guardians yield, by force superior ply'd:
To Int'rest, Prudence; and to Flatt'ry, Pride.
Now Beauty falls betray'd, despis'd, distress'd,
And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.
Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?
Enquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
Which Heav'n may hear, nor deem religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heav'n the measure and the choice.
Safe in his pow'r, whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious pray'r.
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,

[1] Anne Vane, mistress of Frederick, Prince of Wales.
[2] Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, mistress of the Duke of York before he became James II.

Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resign'd;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience sov'reign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heav'n ordain,
These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

(1749)

A Short Song of Congratulation

LONG-EXPECTED one and twenty,
Ling'ring year, at last is flown;
Pomp and pleasure, pride and plenty,
Great Sir John, are all your own.

Loosen'd from the minor's tether,
Free to mortgage or to sell,
Wild as wind, and light as feather,
Bid the slaves of thrift farewell.

Call the Betty's, Kate's, and Jenny's,
Ev'ry name that laughs at care,
Lavish of your Grandsire's guineas,
Show the spirit of an heir.

All that prey on vice and folly
Joy to see their quarry fly,
Here the gamester light and jolly,
There the lender grave and sly.

Wealth, Sir John, was made to wander,
Let it wander as it will:
See the jockey, see the pander,
Bid them come, and take their fill.

When the bonny blade carouses,
Pocket full, and spirits high,

What are acres? What are houses?
Only dirt, or wet or dry.

If the guardian or the mother
Tell the woes of wilful waste,
Scorn their counsel and their pother,
You can hang or drown at last.

(1780)

On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, A Practiser in Physic[1]

CONDEMN'D to Hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,
See Levet to the grave descend;
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills Affection's eye,
Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind;
Nor, letter'd Arrogance, deny
Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
And hov'ring Death prepar'd the blow,
His vig'rous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show.

In Misery's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely Want retir'd to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain disdain'd by pride,

[1] A friend of Johnson's from 1746 to his death in 1782.

The modest wants of ev'ry day
The toil of ev'ry day supplied.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure th' Eternal Master found
The single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;
His frame was firm, his powers were bright,
Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no throbbing fiery pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.

(1782)

Thomas Warton

1728–1790

THOMAS WARTON, the younger brother of Joseph Warton, was born at Basingstoke on January 9, 1728. In 1744 he entered Trinity College, Oxford. The next year he wrote "The Pleasures of Melancholy," which he published in 1747, the year of his graduation from Trinity. In 1749 his "The Temple of Isis," a heroic poem in praise of Oxford, replied to Mason's "Isis" (1748), which had denounced the Jacobitism of the university. In 1750 he won his Master's degree, and the following year, a fellowship. In 1753 he edited "The Union: or Select Scots and English Poems." The following year he brought out his "Observations on The Faery Queen of Spenser," with the second edition corrected and enlarged in 1762. This led to a friendship with Johnson. He was appointed in 1757 professor of poetry at Oxford, a position he held for two terms of five years each. In 1764 he published "The Oxford Sausage; or Select Poetical Pieces written by the most celebrated Wits of the University of Oxford." In 1771 he was elected fellow of the London Society of Antiquaries. The first volume of his "History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century" came out in 1774, the second in 1778, the third, to the end of the age of Elizabeth, in 1781; the fourth was not completed. In 1782 he wrote on the Rowley poems of Chatterton, holding them forgeries, and in the same year he was elected a member of the Literary Club. In 1785 he was appointed Camden professor of history at Oxford and was made poet laureate. His edition of Milton's early poems was one of his best critical works. He died at Oxford on May 20, 1790, and was buried in the antechapel of his college.

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The Pleasures of Melancholy

MOTHER of musings, Contemplation sage,
Whose grotto stands upon the topmost rock
Of Teneriffe; 'mid the tempestuous night,
On which, in calmest meditation held,
Thou hear'st with howling winds the beating rain
And drifting hail descend; or if the skies
Unclouded shine, and through the blue serene
Pale Cynthia rolls her silver-axled car,
Whence gazing steadfast on the spangled vault
Raptur'd thou sitt'st, while murmurs indistinct
Of distant billows soothe thy pensive ear
With hoarse and hollow sounds; secure, self-blest,
There oft thou listen'st to the wild uproar
Of fleets encount'ring, that in whispers low
Ascends the rocky summit, where thou dwell'st
Remote from man, conversing with the spheres!
O lead me, queen sublime, to solemn glooms
Congenial with my soul; to cheerless shades,
To ruin'd seats, to twilight cells and bow'rs,
Where thoughtful Melancholy loves to muse,
Her fav'rite midnight haunts. The laughing scenes
Of purple Spring, where all the wanton train
Of Smiles and Graces seem to lead the dance
In sportive round, while from their hands they show'r
Ambrosial blooms and flow'rs, no longer charm;

Tempe,[1] no more I court thy balmy breeze,
Adieu green vales! ye broider'd meads, adieu!
Beneath yon ruin'd abbey's moss-grown piles
Oft let me sit, at twilight hour of eve,
Where through some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
While sullen sacred silence reigns around,
Save the lone screech-owl's note, who builds his bow'r
Amid the mould'ring caverns dark and damp,
Or the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
Of flaunting ivy, that with mantle green
Invests some wasted tow'r. Or let me tread
Its neighb'ring walk of pines, where mused of old
The cloister'd brothers: through the gloomy void
That far extends beneath their ample arch
As on I pace, religious horror wraps
My soul in dread repose. But when the world
Is clad in Midnight's raven-colour'd robe,
'Mid hollow charnel let me watch the flame
Of taper dim, shedding a livid glare
O'er the wan heaps; while airy voices talk
Along the glimm'ring walls, or ghostly shape
At distance seen, invites with beck'ning hand
My lonesome steps, through the far-winding vaults.
Nor undelightful is the solemn noon
Of night, when haply wakeful from my couch
I start: lo, all is motionless around!
Roars not the rushing wind; the sons of men
And every beast in mute oblivion lie;
All nature's hush'd in silence and in sleep.
O then how fearful is it to reflect,
That through the still globe's awful solitude,
No being wakes but me! till stealing sleep
My drooping temples bathes in opiate dews.
Nor then let dreams, of wanton folly born,
My senses lead through flow'ry paths of joy;
But let the sacred Genius of the night
Such mystic visions send as Spenser saw,
When through bewild'ring Fancy's magic maze,

[1] A beautiful and romantic valley in the north of Thessaly, between the mountains Olympus and Ossa.

To the fell house of Busyrane, he led
Th' unshaken Britomart;[1] or Milton knew,
When in abstracted thought he first conceived
All heav'n in tumult, and the seraphim
Come tow'ring, armed in adamant and gold.
 Let others love soft Summer's ev'ning smiles,
As list'ning to the distant water-fall,
They mark the blushes of the streaky west;
I choose the pale December's foggy glooms.
Then, when the sullen shades of ev'ning close,
Where through the room a blindly-glimm'ring gleam
The dying embers scatter, far remote
From Mirth's mad shouts, that through th' illumin'd roof
Resound with festive echo, let me sit,
Blest with the lowly cricket's drowsy dirge.
Then let my thought contemplative explore
This fleeting state of things, the vain delights,
The fruitless toils, that still our search elude,
As through the wilderness of life we rove.
This sober hour of silence will unmask
False Folly's smile, that like the dazzling spells
Of wily Comus[2] cheat th' unweeting eye
With blear illusion, and persuade to drink
That charmed cup, which Reason's mintage fair
Unmoulds, and stamps the monster on the man.
Eager we taste, but in the luscious draught
Forget the poisonous dregs that lurk beneath.
 Few know that elegance of soul refin'd,
Whose soft sensation feels a quicker joy
From Melancholy's scenes, than the dull pride
Of tasteless spendour and magnificence
Can e'er afford. Thus Eloise, whose mind
Had languish'd to the pangs of melting love,
More genuine transport found, as on some tomb
Reclin'd, she watch'd the tapers of the dead;
Or through the pillar'd aisles, amid pale shrines
Of imag'd saints, and intermingled graves,
Mus'd a veil'd votaress; than Flavia feels,

[1] See Spenser's "Faerie Queen," III, xi, xii; and Milton's "Paradise Lost," VI, for the following lines.
[2] See Milton's "Comus," ll. 153f., 523f., 651.

As through the mazes of the festive ball,
Proud of her conquering charms, and beauty's blaze,
She floats amid the silken sons of dress,
And shines the fairest of th' assembled fair.
When azure noontide cheers the dædal[1] globe,
And the blest regent of the golden day
Rejoices in his bright meridian tower,
How oft my wishes ask the night's return
That best befriends the melancholy mind!
Hail, sacred Night! thou too shalt share my song!
Sister of ebon-sceptred Hecate, hail!
Whether in congregated clouds thou wrap'st
Thy viewless chariot, or with silver crown
Thy beaming head encirclest, ever hail!
What though beneath thy gloom the sorceress-train,
Far in obscured haunt of Lapland moors,
With rhymes uncouth the bloody cauldron bless;
Though Murder wan beneath thy shrouding shade
Summons her slow-eyed vot'ries to devise
Of secret slaughter, while by one blue lamp
In hideous conf'rence sits the list'ning band,
And starts at each low wind, or wakeful sound:
Why though thy stay the pilgrim curseth oft,
As all benighted in Arabian wastes
He hears the wilderness around him howl
With roaming monsters, while on his hoar head
The black-descending tempest ceaseless beats;
Yet more delightful to my pensive mind
Is thy return, than blooming morn's approach,
Ev'n then, in youthful pride of opening May,
When from the portals of the saffron east
She sheds fresh roses, and ambrosial dews.
Yet not ungrateful is the morn's approach,
When dropping wet she comes, and clad in clouds,
While through the damp air scowls the louring south,
Blackening the landscape's face, that grove and hill
In formless vapours undistinguish'd swim:
Th' afflicted songsters of the sadden'd groves
Hail not the sullen gloom; the waving elms
That, hoar through time, and rang'd in thick array,

[1] wrought with art; variegated.

Enclose with stately row some rural hall,
Are mute, nor echo with the clamours hoarse
Of rooks rejoicing on their airy boughs;
While to the shed the dripping poultry crowd,
A mournful train; secure the village hind
Hangs o'er the crackling blaze, nor tempts the storm;
Fix'd in th' unfinish'd furrow rests the plough:
Rings not the high wood with enliven'd shouts
Of early hunter: all is silence drear;
And deepest sadness wraps the face of things.
 Through Pope's soft song though all the Graces breathe,
And happiest art adorn his Attic page;
Yet does my mind with sweeter transport glow,
As at the root of mossy trunk reclin'd,
In magic Spenser's wildly-warbled song
I see deserted Una[1] wander wide
Through wasteful solitudes, and lurid heaths,
Weary, forlorn; than when the fated fair
Upon the bosom bright of silver Thames
Launches in all the lustre of brocade,
Amid the splendours of the laughing sun.[2]
The gay description palls upon the sense,
And coldly strikes the mind with feeble bliss.
 Ye youths of Albion's beauty-blooming isle,
Whose brows have worn the wreath of luckless love,
Is there a pleasure like the pensive mood,
Whose magic wont to soothe your soften'd souls?
O tell how rapturous the joy, to melt
To Melody's assuasive voice; to bend
Th' uncertain step along the midnight mead,
And pour your sorrows to the pitying moon,
By many a slow trill from the bird of woe
Oft interrupted; in embow'ring woods
By darksome brook to muse, and there forget
The solemn dullness of the tedious world,
While fancy grasps the visionary fair;
And now no more th' abstracted ear attends
The water's murm'ring lapse, th' entranced eye
Pierces no longer through th' extended rows

[1] See Spenser's "Faerie Queene," Book I.
[2] See Pope's "Rape of the Lock."

Of thick-rang'd trees; till haply from the depth
The woodman's stroke, or distant tinkling team,
Or heifers rustling through the brake, alarms
Th' illuded sense, and mars the golden dream.
These are delights that absence drear has made
Familiar to my soul, e'er since the form
Of young Sapphira, beauteous as the spring,
When from her vi'let-woven couch awak'd
By frolic Zephyr's hand, her tender cheek
Graceful she lifts, and blushing from her bow'r
Issues to clothe in gladsome-glist'ring green
The genial globe, first met my dazzled sight:
These are delights unknown to minds profane,
And which alone the pensive soul can taste.
The taper'd choir, at the late hour of pray'r,
Oft let me tread, while to th' according voice
The many-sounding organ peals on high
The clear slow-dittied chaunt, or varied hymn,
Till all my soul is bath'd in ecstasies,
And lapp'd in Paradise. Or let me sit
Far in sequester'd aisles of the deep dome,
There lonesome listen to the sacred sounds,
Which, as they lengthen through the Gothic vaults,
In hollow murmurs reach my ravish'd ear.
Nor when the lamps expiring yield to night,
And solitude returns, would I forsake
The solemn mansion, but attentive mark
The due clock swinging slow with sweepy sway,
Measuring Time's flight with momentary sound.
Nor let me fail to cultivate my mind
With the soft thrillings of the tragic Muse,
Divine Melpomene,[1] sweet Pity's nurse,
Queen of the stately step, and flowing pall.
Now let Monimia[2] mourn with streaming eyes
Her joys incestuous, and polluted love:
Now let soft Juliet in the gaping tomb
Print the last kiss on her true Romeo's lips,
His lips yet reeking from the deadly draught:

[1] the Muse presiding over tragedy.
[2] the heroine in Otway's "The Orphan."

Or Jaffier[1] kneel for one forgiving look.
Nor seldom let the Moor on Desdemone
Pour the misguided threats of jealous rage.
By soft degrees the manly torrent steals
From my swoln eyes; and at a brother's woe
My big heart melts in sympathizing tears.
What are the splendours of the gaudy court,
Its tinsel trappings, and its pageant pomps?
To me far happier seems the banish'd lord,
Amid Siberia's unrejoicing wilds
Who pines all lonesome, in the chambers hoar
Of some high castle shut, whose windows dim
In distant ken discover trackless plains,
Where Winter ever whirls his icy car;
While still repeated objects of his view,
The gloomy battlements, and ivied spires,
That crown the solitary dome, arise;
While from the topmost turret the slow clock,
Far heard along th' inhospitable wastes,
With sad-returning chime awakes new grief;
Ev'n he far happier seems than is the proud,
The potent Satrap, whom he left behind
'Mid Moscow's golden palaces, to drown
In ease and luxury the laughing hours.
Illustrious objects strike the gazer's mind
With feeble bliss, and but allure the sight,
Nor rouse with impulse quick th' unfeeling heart.
Thus seen by shepherd from Hymettus'[2] brow,
What dædal landscapes smile! here palmy groves
Resounding once with Plato's voice, arise,
Amid whose umbrage green her silver head
Th' unfading olive lifts; here vine-clad hills
Lay forth their purple store, and sunny vales
In prospect vast their level laps expand,
Amid whose beauties glistering Athens tow'rs.
Though through the blissful scenes Ilissus[3] roll
His sage-inspiring flood, whose winding marge
The thick-wove laurel shades; though roseate Morn

[1] the hero in Otway's "Venice Preserved."
[2] a mountain in Attica celebrated for its honey.
[3] a small river in Attica.

Pour all her splendours on th' empurpled scene;
Yet feels the hoary hermit truer joys,
As from the cliff, that o'er his cavern hangs,
He views the piles of fall'n Persepolis[1]
In deep arrangement hide the darksome plain.
Unbounded waste! the mould'ring obelisk
Here, like a blasted oak, ascends the clouds;
Here Parian domes[2] their vaulted halls disclose
Horrid with thorn, where lurks th' unpitying thief,
Whence flits the twilight-loving bat at eve,
And the deaf adder wreathes her spotted train,
The dwellings once of elegance and art.
Here temples rise, amid whose hallow'd bounds
Spires the black pine, while through the naked street,
Once haunt of tradeful merchants, springs the grass:
Here columns heap'd on prostrate columns, torn
From their firm base, increase the mould'ring mass.
Far as the sight can pierce, appear the spoils
Of sunk magnificence! a blended scene
Of moles, fanes, arches, domes, and palaces,
Where, with his brother Horror, Ruin sits.
 O, come then, Melancholy, queen of thought!
O, come, with saintly look, and steadfast step,
From forth thy cave embower'd with mournful yew,
Where ever to the curfew's solemn sound
List'ning thou sitt'st, and with thy cypress bind
Thy votary's hair, and seal him for thy son.
But never let Euphrosyne[3] beguile
With toys of wanton mirth my fixed mind,
Nor in my path her primrose garland cast.
Though 'mid her train the dimpled Hebe bare
Her rosy bosom to th' enamour'd view;
Though Venus, mother of the Smiles and Loves,
And Bacchus, ivy-crown'd in citron bow'r
With her on nectar-streaming fruitage feast.
What though 'tis hers to calm the low'ring skies,
And at her presence mild th' embattled clouds

[1] The capital of Persia and the Persian empire, which, it was said, was set on fire by Alexander the Great at the instigation of the courtesan Thais in 331 B.C.

[2] Buildings of marble from the island of Paros, celebrated for its fine stone.

[3] Joy, one of the Graces.

Disperse in air, and o'er the face of heav'n
New day diffusive gleam at her approach;
Yet are these joys that Melancholy gives,
Than all her witless revels happier far;
These deep-felt joys, by Contemplation taught.
Then ever, beauteous Contemplation, hail!
From thee began, auspicious maid, my song,
With thee shall end; for thou art fairer far
Than are the nymphs of Cirrha's mossy grot;[1]
To loftier rapture thou canst wake the thought
Than all the fabling poet's boasted pow'rs.
Hail, queen divine! whom, as tradition tells,
Once in his evening walk a Druid found,
Far in a hollow glade of Mona's[2] woods;
And piteous bore with hospitable hand
To the close shelter of his oaken bow'r.
There soon the sage admiring mark'd the dawn
Of solemn musing in your pensive thought;
For, when a smiling babe, you lov'd to lie
Oft deeply list'ning to the rapid roar
Of wood-hung Menai,[3] stream of Druids old.

(1745)

Written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's "Monasticon"[4]

Deem not, devoid of elegance, the sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguil'd,
Of painful Pedantry the poring child;
Who turns, of these proud domes,[5] th' historic page,
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.[6]
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smil'd
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage

[1] The Muses. The town and plain of Cirrha are in Phocis at the foot of Mt. Parnassus. Cf *Cirrhæa antra* ("Annæus Lucanus," V, 95; and "Silius Italicus," III, 9).

[2] Anglesea, an island northwest of Wales.

[3] Menai Strait, between Mona and Wales.

[4] Sir William Dugdale (1605-86) published his "Monasticon Anglicanum" in three volumes (1655–73). It is a treatise on English monasteries.

[5] buildings. [6] the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely styl'd,
Intent. While cloister'd Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictur'd stores.
Nor rough, nor barren, are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

(1777)

Written at Stonehenge[1]

THOU noblest monument of Albion's isle!
Whether by Merlin's aid, from Scythia's shore,
To Amber's fatal plain Pendragon bore,
Huge frame of giant-hands, the mighty pile,
T' entomb his Britons slain by Hengist's guile:[2]
Or Druid priests, sprinkled with human gore,
Taught 'mid thy massy maze their mystic lore:
Or Danish chiefs, enrich'd with savage spoil,
To Victory's idol vast, an unhewn shrine,
Rear'd the rude heap: or, in thy hallow'd round,
Repose the kings of Brutus'[3] genuine line;
Or here those kings in solemn state were crown'd:
Studious to trace thy wondrous origine,
We muse on many an ancient tale renown'd.

(1777)

[1] *Stonehenge is on Salisbury Plain, in the south of England.*

[2] One of the traditions was that Pendragon, the mythical king of Britain, brought these huge stones by the aid of his magician Merlin from Scythia to Ireland to England. "Amber's plain" is the plain of Ambrosius, a leader of the Britons, from whom the near-by town of Amesbury is supposed to have its name. The tradition that the stones were erected in memory of treacherously slain Britons is also contained in Drayton's "Poly-Olbion," III, 139f.:

> " . . . and all those trophies high
> That ancient times have rear'd to noble memory;
> As, Stonendge, that to tell the British Princes slain
> By those false Saxons' fraud, here ever shall remain."

Hengist was the reputed leader of these false Saxons.

[3] Brutus was the great-great-grandson of Æneas and was the legendary ancestor of the Britons.

On King Arthur's Round Table at Winchester

WHERE Venta's[1] Norman castle still uprears
Its rafter'd hall, that o'er the grassy foss,
And scatter'd flinty fragments clad in moss,
On yonder steep in naked state appears;
High-hung remains, the pride of warlike years,
Old Arthur's board: on the capacious round
Some British pen has sketch'd the names renown'd,
In marks obscure, of his immortal peers.
Though join'd by magic skill, with many a rhyme,
The Druid frame, unhonour'd, falls a prey
To the slow vengeance of the wizard Time,
And fade the British characters away;
Yet Spenser's page, that chants in verse sublime
Those chiefs, shall live, unconscious of decay.

(1777)

To the River Lodon[2]

AH! WHAT a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crown'd,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath thy azure sky, and golden sun:
Where first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive Memory traces back the round,
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road!
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flow'd,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature;
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestow'd.

(1777)

[1] Venta was the Roman name for Winchester.
[2] The river Lodon is near Basingstoke, Warton's native town.

Jane Elliot

1727–1805

JANE ELLIOT, the daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, second baronet of Minto, was born at Minto House in Teviotdale, Scotland. At the age of sixteen, she so graciously and lengthily entertained a company of Jacobites in search of her father as a dangerous Whig that he was able to escape from the house and hide in the mountains. In 1756 her brother Gilbert suggested to her the theme for her ballad, "The Flowers of the Forest," which was published anonymously and was an instant success. It was thought at first to be an old ballad miraculously preserved. She is not known to have written any other poem. After her father's death, she settled in Edinburgh with her mother and sisters. She is said to have been "the last woman in Edinburgh to make regular use of her own sedan-chair" (D.N.B.). In 1804 she returned to her early home. She died on March 29, 1805.

EDITION

Herd: "Scottish Songs." 1776.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Veitch, J.: "The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border." 2 vols. 1878.

The Flowers of the Forest

I'VE heard them lilting,[1] at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a-lilting, before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning, on ilka green loaning;[2]
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede[3] away.

At bughts[4] in the morning nae blythe lads are scorning;[5]
The lasses are lanely, and dowie,[6] and wae;
Nae daffing,[7] nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin,[8] and hies her away.

[1] singing. [2] lane. [3] carried off by death. [4] sheepfolds.
[5] jeering. [6] melancholy; dull. [7] making merry. [8] milk pail.

In hairst,[1] at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters[2] are lyart,[3] and runkled and grey;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching[4]—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies[5] are roaming
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle[6] to play;
But ilk ane sits eerie, lamenting her dearie—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae more lilting at our ewe-milking,
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

(1756)

[1] harvest. [2] binders. [3] gray-haired. [4] beseeching.
[5] strapping young fellows. [6] bugbear; bogy.

Charles Churchill

1731–1764

CHARLES CHURCHILL, the son of a rector of Rainham, Essex, and also, from 1733, curate and lecturer of St. John's, Westminster, was born in Westminster in February, 1731. At the age of eight he entered Westminster School and in 1745 was elected to the foundation. He was not admitted to either Oxford or Cambridge, probably because of a "Fleet" marriage with a Westminster girl named Scot. Notwithstanding that handicap, he was ordained curate of South Cadbury, in Somersetshire. It is said also that he had a curacy in South Wales, where he "eked out an income of £30 a year by opening a cider cellar" (D.N.B.). In 1756 he was ordained priest and was given a curacy under his father at Rainham. When his father died in 1758, the parishioners of St. John's elected the son to the lectureship also, notwithstanding the statement that "sleep at his bidding crept from pew to pew." In 1761 he was formally separated from his wife. In the same year he published his "Rosciad" at his own risk, since he could not persuade a publisher to undertake its publication; and he had the satisfaction of an immediate success. It came out anonymously, but the authorship was soon acknowledged. He followed it up with an "Apology Addressed to the Critical Reviewers," which gave him more satisfaction than it did the reviewers. Churchill soon became the terror of the theatre. He got between £750 and £1000 for the two poems, which paid better than his side line of a cider cellar or a schoolroom. He came out in all the glory of a "blue coat with metal buttons, and gold lace in hat and waistcoat," to the scandalizing of his parishioners. He became the friend of Wilkes, the notorious political agitator, and took his part in "The Duellist" (1763), a satire on Wilkes's enemies. In "The Ghost" he dared ridicule Dr. Johnson as Don Pomposo for his interest in the Cock Lane ghost story. In 1764 he brought out his "Gotham," a poem dealing with his political philosophy. The same year, on November 4, he died at Boulogne. His body was brought to Dover and buried in the old churchyard of St. Martin.

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Anonymous: "Charles Churchill," in *London Times Literary Supplement*, February 5, 1931.

The Rosciad[1]

QUIN,[2] from afar, lur'd by the scent of fame,
A stage leviathan, put in his claim,
Pupil of Betterton and Booth. Alone,
Sullen he walk'd, and deem'd the chair his own.
For how should moderns mushrooms of the day,
Who ne'er those masters knew, know how to play?
His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the sullen habit of his soul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,
Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage.
When Hector's lovely widow[3] shines in tears,
Or Rowe's gay rake[4] dependent virtue jeers,
With the same cast of features he is seen
To chide the libertine, and court the queen.
From the tame scene, which without passion flows,

[1] Roscius was the most celebrated comic actor in Rome, and his name came to be applied to actors in general, if they attained any distinction. He died in 62 B.C. A Rosciad is a poem about actors; this one is a satire on Churchill's contemporaries.

[2] James Quin was very popular until overshadowed by Garrick.

[3] Andromache, as she appears in Ambrose Philips's "Distressed Mother."

[4] Lothario, in Nicholas Rowe's "The Fair Penitent" (1703).

With just desert his reputation rose;
Nor less he pleas'd, when, on some surly plan,
He was, at once, the actor and the man.
In Brute[1] he shone unequall'd: all agree
Garrick's not half so great a brute as he.
When Cato's[2] labour'd scenes are brought to view,
With equal praise the actor labour'd too;
For still you'll find, trace passions to their root,
Small diff'rence 'twixt the stoic and the brute.
In fancied scenes, as in life's real plan,
He could not, for a moment, sink the man.
In whate'er cast his character was laid,
Self still, like oil, upon the surface play'd.
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in:
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff[3]—still 'twas Quin. . . .
Last Garrick[4] came.—Behind him throng a train
Of snarling critics, ignorant as vain.
One finds out,—"He's of stature somewhat low,—
Your hero always should be tall, you know;—
True nat'ral greatness all consists in height."
Produce your voucher, Critic.—"Serjeant Kyte."[5]
Another can't forgive the paltry arts,
By which he makes his way to shallow hearts;
Mere pieces of finesse, traps for applause.—
"Avaunt! unnat'ral start, affected pause."
For me, by Nature form'd to judge with phlegm,
I can't acquit by wholesale, nor condemn.
The best things carried to excess are wrong:
The start may be too frequent, pause too long;
But, only us'd in proper time and place,
Severest judgment must allow them grace.
If bunglers, form'd on imitation's plan,
Just in the way that monkeys mimic man,
Their copied scene with mangled arts disgrace,
And pause and start with the same vacant face;

[1] Sir John Brute, in Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife" (1697).
[2] Addison's "Cato" (1713).
[3] Horatio, a young man in Rowe's "Fair Penitent"; Dorax, a renegade Portuguese nobleman in Dryden's "Don Sebastian"; Falstaff, the great comic knight in Shakspere's "Henry IV."
[4] David Garrick (1717–79) was the greatest actor of his time.
[5] The recruiting sergeant in Farquhar's "The Recruiting Officer."

We join the critic laugh; those tricks we scorn,
Which spoil the scenes they mean them to adorn.
But when, from Nature's pure and genuine source,
These strokes of acting flow with gen'rous force,
When in the features all the soul's portray'd,
And passions, such as Garrick's, are display'd,
To me they seem from quickest feelings caught:
Each start is nature, and each pause is thought.
When reason yields to passion's wild alarms,
And the whole state of man is up in arms;
What, but a critic, could condemn the play'r
For pausing here, when cool sense pauses there?
Whilst, working from the heart, the fire I trace,
And mark it strongly flaming to the face;
Whilst, in each sound, I hear the very man;
I can't catch words, and pity those who can.
Let wits, like spiders, from the tortur'd brain
Fine-draw the critic-web with curious pain;
The gods,—a kindness I with thanks must pay,—
Have form'd me of a coarser kind of clay;
Not stung with envy, nor with spleen diseas'd,
A poor dull creature, still with Nature pleas'd:
Hence to thy praises, Garrick, I agree,
And, pleas'd with Nature, must be pleas'd with thee.
Now might I tell, how silence reign'd throughout,
And deep attention hush'd the rabble rout:
How ev'ry claimant, tortur'd with desire,
Was pale as ashes, or as red as fire:
But, loose to fame, the Muse more simply acts,
Rejects all flourish, and relates mere facts.
The judges, as the sev'ral parties came,
With temper heard, with judgment weigh'd each claim,
And, in their sentence happily agreed,
In name of both, great Shakespeare thus decreed:—
"If manly sense, if Nature link'd with Art;
If thorough knowledge of the human heart;
If pow'rs of acting vast and unconfin'd;
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd;
If strong expression, and strange pow'rs, which lie
Within the magic circle of the eye;
If feelings which few hearts, like his, can know,

And which no face so well as his can show;
Deserve the preference;—Garrick, take the chair;
Nor quit it—till thou place an equal there."

(1761)

The Ghost

BOOK II

Pomposo,[1] (insolent and loud,
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,
Whose very name inspires an awe,
Whose ev'ry word is sense and law,
For what his greatness hath decreed,
Like laws of Persia and of Mede,
Sacred through all the realm of wit,
Must never of repeal admit;
Who, cursing flatt'ry, is the tool
Of ev'ry fawning, flatt'ring fool;
Who wit with jealous eye surveys,
And sickens at another's praise;
Who, proudly seized of Learning's throne,
Now damns all learning but his own;
Who scorns those common wares to trade in,
Reas'ning, convincing, and persuading,
But makes each sentence current pass
With "puppy," "coxcomb," "scoundrel," "ass,"
For 't is with him a certain rule,
The folly's prov'd when he calls fool;
Who, to increase his native strength,
Draws words six syllables in length,
With which, assisted with a frown
By way of club, he knocks us down;
Who 'bove the vulgar dares to rise,
And sense of decency defies;
For this same decency is made
Only for bunglers in the trade,
And, like the cobweb laws, is still
Broke through by great ones when they will)—

[1] Pomposo is Dr. Johnson.

Pomposo, with strong sense supplied,
Supported, and confirm'd by pride,
His comrades' terrors to beguile
"Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile":
Features so horrid, were it light,
Would put the devil himself to flight. . . .

BOOK III

Horrid, unwieldy, without form,
Savage as ocean in a storm,
Of size prodigious, in the rear,
That post of honour, should appear
Pomposo; fame around should tell
How he a slave to inter'st fell,
How, for integrity renown'd,
Which booksellers have often found,
He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes their cash—but where's the book?[1]
No matter where—wise fear, we know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?
No man alive, who would not swear
All's safe, and therefore honest there;
For, spite of all the learned say,
If we to truth attention pay,
The word dishonesty is meant
For nothing else but punishment.
Fame, too, should tell, nor heed the threat
Of rogues, who brother rogues abet,
Nor tremble at the terrors hung
Aloft, to make her hold her tongue,
How to all principles untrue,
Not fix'd to old friends, nor to new,
He damns the pension which he takes,
And loves the Stuart he forsakes.
Nature (who justly regular

[1] The allusion is to the edition of Shakspere's plays, for which Johnson had received subscriptions since his "Proposals for Printing the Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare," issued in 1756. "The Ghost" was published in 1762.

Is very seldom known to err,
But now and then in sportive mood,
As some rude wits have understood,
Or through much work requir'd in haste,
Is with a random stroke disgrac'd)
Pomposo, form'd on doubtful plan,
Not quite a beast, nor quite a man,
Like—God knows what—for never yet
Could the most subtle human wit
Find out a monster which might be
The shadow of a simile.

(1762)

Christopher Smart

1721–1771

CHRISTOPHER SMART, who came of an old north-country family, was born at Shipbourne in Kent on April 11, 1721. In 1739 he was admitted to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; he took his B.A. in 1742, was appointed fellow of his college in 1745, and was made prelector in philosophy and keeper of the common chest. In 1747 his extravaganza, "A Trip to Cambridge, or the Grateful Fair," was the last play acted by undergraduates in Cambridge, it is said, till recent times. In this year he won his M.A. but lost all his college positions, apparently because of his many debts. However, by winning in 1750 the Seatonian prize for the best poem on the attributes of the Supreme Being, he was able to get rid of the bailiffs. In the same year he published "The Horatian Canons of Friendship, Being the Third Satire of the First Book of Horace Imitated, by Ebenezer Pentweazle." In 1751 he began directing a three-penny journal called *The Midwife*, which ran to three volumes. In the year following he published "Poems on Several Occasions," of which the feature was "The Hop Garden," describing the beauties of Kent. Counter to all the rules of his fellowship he married (1753), and when the Cambridge authorities heard of it in November, they were ready to make trouble for him, but relented on condition that he write for the Seatonian prize. Towards the close of 1754 he left Cambridge for London.

In 1756 Smart wrote a prose translation of Horace, and a "Hymn to the Supreme Being," and again won the Seatonian prize for his poem "On the Goodness of the Supreme Being." At this time also, he was under contract to write a monthly miscellany called *The Universal Visiter*, to which Johnson sometimes contributed. It was in this year that his madness began to manifest itself. At first his family kept him quietly at home, hoping that he would recover, but as he grew steadily worse, they committed him in 1760 to a madhouse, where he remained until September, 1762. To help him financially, Garrick gave a benefit performance of "Merope," and Goldsmith and other friends collected money for him in 1759 and 1760 When he was permitted to leave the asylum, he would have nothing to do with those who had had him confined. It was probably after his release that he wrote the "Song to David," since it was not published

till April 8, 1763. Dr. Johnson said of Smart, whose insanity took the form of literal obedience to the Scriptural command to pray without ceasing, that he'd "as lief pray with Kit Smart as with any one else." In 1765 he wrote a metrical version of Phædrus and the Psalms. He was put in prison for debt in 1759–60 and remained there until his death on May 21, 1771. He was buried in St. Paul's churchyard.

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A Song to David

O Thou, that sit'st upon a throne,
With harp of high majestic tone,
To praise the King of kings;
And voice of heav'n-ascending swell,
Which, while its deeper notes excel,
Clear, as a clarion, rings:

To bless each valley, grove and coast,
And charm the cherubs to the post
Of gratitude in throngs;
To keep the days on Zion's mount,
And send the year to his account,
With dances and with songs:

O servant of God's holiest charge,
The minister of praise at large,

Which thou may'st now receive;
From thy blest mansion hail and hear,
From topmost eminence appear
To this the wreath I weave.

Great, valiant, pious, good, and clean,
Sublime, contemplative, serene,
Strong, constant, pleasant, wise!
Bright effluence of exceeding grace;
Best man!—the swiftness and the race,
The peril, and the prize!

Great—from the lustre of his crown,
From Samuel's horn and God's renown,
Which is the people's voice;
For all the host, from rear to van,
Applauded and embrac'd the man—
The man of God's own choice.

Valiant—the word, and up he rose—
The fight—he triumph'd o'er his foes,
Whom God's just laws abhor;
And arm'd in gallant faith he took
Against the boaster, from the brook,
The weapons of the war.

Pious—magnificent and grand;
'Twas he the famous temple plan'd:
(The seraph in his soul)
Foremost to give his Lord his dues,
Foremost to bless the welcome news,
And foremost to condole.

Good—from Jehudah's genuine vein,
From God's best nature good in grain,
His aspect and his heart;
To pity, to forgive, to save,
Witness En-gedi's conscious cave,[1]
And Shimei's blunted dart.[2]

[1] See I Samuel, xxiii, 29, and xxiv, 1f.
[2] See II Samuel, xvi, 5f., and xix, 16f.

Clean—if perpetual prayer be pure,
And love, which could itself inure
To fasting and to fear—
Clean in his gestures, hands, and feet,
To smite the lyre, the dance complete,
To play the sword and spear.

Sublime—invention ever young,
Of vast conception, tow'ring tongue,
To God th' eternal theme;
Notes from yon exaltations caught,
Unrival'd royalty of thought,
O'er meaner strains supreme.

Contemplative—on God to fix
His musings, and above the six
The sabbath-day he blest;
'Twas then his thoughts self-conquest prun'd,
And heavenly melancholy tun'd,
To bless and bear the rest.

Serene—to sow the seeds of peace,
Rememb'ring, when he watch'd the fleece,
How sweetly Kidron purl'd—
To further knowledge, silence vice,
And plant perpetual paradise
When God had calm'd the world.

Strong—in the Lord, who could defy
Satan, and all his powers that lie
In sempiternal night;
And hell, and horror, and despair
Were as the lion and the bear
To his undaunted might.

Constant—in love to God the Truth,
Age, manhood, infancy, and youth—
To Jonathan his friend
Constant, beyond the verge of death;
And Ziba and Mephibosheth,[1]
His endless fame attend.

[1] Ziba was the servant of Mephibosheth, who was the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul and David's dearest friend. See II Samuel, ix and xvi.

Pleasant—and various as the year;
Man, soul, and angel, without peer,
 Priest, champion, sage and boy;
In armour, or in ephod clad,
His pomp, his piety was glad;
 Majestic was his joy.

Wise—in recovery from his fall,
Whence rose his eminence o'er all,
 Of all the most revil'd;
The light of Israel in his ways,
Wise are his precepts, prayer and praise,
 And counsel to his child.

His muse, bright angel of his verse,
Gives balm for all the thorns that pierce,
 For all the pangs that rage;
Blest light, still gaining on the gloom,
The more than Michal[1] of his bloom,
 Th' Abishag[2] of his age.

He sung of God—the mighty source
Of all things—the stupendous force
 On which all strength depends;
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes,
All period, pow'r, and enterprise
 Commences, reigns, and ends.

Angels—their ministry and meed,
Which to and fro with blessings speed,
 Or with their citterns wait;
Where Michael with his millions bows,
Where dwells the seraph and his spouse,
 The cherub and her mate.

Of man—the semblance and effect
Of God and Love—the Saint elect

[1] Michal was the daughter of Saul and the wife of David.
[2] When David was very old, Abishag the Shunammite "ministered unto the king" (I Kings, i. 15).

For infinite applause—
To rule the land, and briny broad,
To be laborious in his laud,
And heroes in his cause.

The world—the clust'ring spheres he made,
The glorious light, the soothing shade,
Dale, champaign, grove, and hill;
The multitudinous abyss,
Where secrecy remains in bliss,
And wisdom hides her skill.

Trees, plants, and flow'rs—of virtuous root;
Gem yielding blossom, yielding fruit,
Choice gums and precious balm;
Bless ye the nosegay in the vale,
And with the sweetness of the gale
Enrich the thankful psalm.

Of fowl—e'en ev'ry beak and wing
Which cheer the winter, hail the spring,
That live in peace or prey;
They that make music, or that mock,
The quail, the brave domestic cock,
The raven, swan, and jay.

Of fishes—ev'ry size and shape,
Which nature frames of light escape,
Devouring man to shun:
The shells are in the wealthy deep,
The shoals upon the surface leap,
And love the glancing sun.

Of beasts—the beaver plods his task;
While the sleek tigers roll and bask,
Nor yet the shades arouse;
Her cave the mining coney scoops;
Where o'er the mead the mountain stoops,
The kids exult and browse.

Of gems—their virtue and their price,
Which hid in earth from man's device,

Their darts of lustre sheathe;
The jasper of the master's stamp,
The topaz blazing like a lamp
Among the mines beneath.

Blest was the tenderness he felt
When to his graceful harp he knelt,
And did for audience call;
When Satan with his hand he quell'd,
And in serene suspense he held
The frantic throes of Saul.

His furious foes no more malign'd
As he such melody divin'd,
And sense and soul detain'd;
Now striking strong, now soothing soft,
He sent the godly sounds aloft,
Or in delight refrain'd.

When up to heav'n his thoughts he pil'd,
From fervent lips fair Michal smil'd,
As blush to blush she stood;
And chose herself the queen, and gave
Her utmost from her heart, "so brave,
And plays his hymns so good."

The pillars of the Lord are seven,[1]
Which stand from earth to topmost heav'n;
His wisdom drew the plan;
His Word accomplish'd the design,
From brightest gem to deepest mine,
From Christ enthron'd to man.

Alpha, the cause of causes, first
In station, fountain, whence the burst
Of light, and blaze of day;
Whence bold attempt, and brave advance,
Have motion, life, and ordinance,
And heav'n itself its stay

[1] "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars."—Proverbs, ix, 1.

Gamma supports the glorious arch
On which angelic legions march,
And is with sapphires pav'd;
Thence the fleet clouds are sent adrift,
And thence the painted folds, that lift
The crimson veil, are wav'd.

Eta with living sculpture breathes,
With verdant carvings, flow'ry wreathes
Of never-wasting bloom;
In strong relief his goodly base
All instruments of labour grace,
The trowel, spade, and loom.

Next Theta stands to the Supreme—
Who form'd, in number, sign, and scheme,
Th' illustrious lights that are;
And one address'd his saffron robe,
And one, clad in a silver globe,
Held rule with ev'ry star.

Iota's tun'd to choral hymns
Of those that fly, while he that swims
In thankful safety lurks;
And foot, and chapitre,[1] and niche,
The various histories enrich
Of God's recorded works.

Sigma presents the social droves,
With him that solitary roves,
And man of all the chief;
Fair on whose face, and stately frame,
Did God impress his hallow'd name,
For ocular belief.

Omega! Greatest and the Best,
Stands sacred to the day of rest,
For gratitude and thought;
Which bless'd the world upon his pole,

[1] the capital of a column.

And gave the universe his goal,
 And clos'd th' infernal draught.

O David, scholar of the Lord!
Such is thy science, whence reward
 And infinite degree;
O strength, O sweetness, lasting ripe!
God's harp thy symbol, and thy type
 The lion and the bee!

There is but One who ne'er rebell'd,
But One by passion unimpell'd,
 By pleasures unintic'd;
He from himself his semblance sent,
Grand object of his own content,
 And saw the God in Christ.

Tell them I am, Jehova said
To Moses; while earth heard in dread,
 And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
 Replied, O Lord, Thou Art.

Thou art—to give and to confirm,
For each his talent and his term;
 All flesh thy bounties share:
Thou shalt not call thy brother fool;
The porches of the Christian school
 Are meekness, peace, and pray'r.

Open, and naked of offence,
Man's made of mercy, soul, and sense;
 God arm'd the snail and wilk;[2]
Be good to him that pulls thy plough;
Due food and care, due rest, allow
 For her that yields thee milk.

Rise up before the hoary head,
And God's benign commandment dread,

[1] the drawing of souls to hell. [2] whelk.

Which says thou shalt not die:
"Not as I will, but as thou wilt,"[1]
Pray'd He whose conscience knew no guilt;
With whose bless'd pattern vie.

Use all thy passions!—love is thine,
And joy, and jealousy divine;
Thine hope's eternal fort,
And care thy leisure to disturb,
With fear concupiscence to curb,
And rapture to transport.

Act simply, as occasion asks;
Put mellow wine in season'd casks;
Till not with ass and bull:
Remember thy baptismal bond;
Keep from commixtures foul and fond,
Nor work thy flax with wool.

Distribute: pay the Lord his tithe,
And make the widow's heart-strings blithe;
Resort with those that weep:
As you from all and each expect,
For all and each thy love direct,
And render as you reap.

The slander and its bearer spurn,
And propagating praise sojourn
To make thy welcome last;
Turn from old Adam to the New;
By hope futurity pursue;
Look upwards to the past.

Control thine eye, salute success,
Honour the wiser, happier bless,
And for thy neighbour feel;
Grutch[2] not of mammon and his leaven,
Work emulation up to heaven
By knowledge and by zeal.

[1] See Mark, xiv, 36. [2] Murmur; complain; repine.—*N.E.D.*

O David, highest on the list
Of worthies, on God's ways insist,
 The genuine word repeat:
Vain are the documents of men,
And vain the flourish of the pen
 That keeps the fool's conceit.

Praise above all—for praise prevails;
Heap up the measure, load the scales,
 And good to goodness add:
The gen'rous soul her saviour aids,
But peevish obloquy degrades;
 The Lord is great and glad.

For Adoration all the ranks
Of angels yield eternal thanks,
 And David in the midst;
With God's good poor, which, last and least
In man's esteem, thou to thy feast,
 O blessed bride-groom, bidst.

For Adoration seasons change,
And order, truth, and beauty range,
 Adjust, attract, and fill:
The grass the polyanthus cheques;
And polish'd porphyry reflects,
 By the descending rill.

Rich almonds colour to the prime
For Adoration; tendrils climb,
 And fruit-trees pledge their gems;
And Ivis[1] with her gorgeous vest
Builds for her eggs her cunning nest,
 And bell-flowers bow their stems.

With vinous syrup cedars spout;
From rocks pure honey gushing out,
 For Adoration springs:
All scenes of painting crowd the map

[1] Humming-bird.—*Smart's note.*

Of nature; to the mermaid's pap
The scaled infant clings.

The spotted ounce[1] and playsome cubs
Run rustling 'mongst the flow'ring shrubs,
And lizards feed the moss;
For Adoration beasts embark,[2]
While waves upholding halcyon's ark[3]
No longer roar and toss.

While Israel sits beneath his fig.
With coral root and amber sprig
The wean'd advent'rer sports;
Where to the palm the jasmin cleaves,
For Adoration 'mongst the leaves
The gale his peace reports.

Increasing days their reign exalt,
Nor in the pink and mottled vault
Th' opposing spirits tilt;
And, by the coasting reader spied,
The silverlings[4] and crusions[5] glide
For Adoration gilt.

For Adoration rip'ning canes
And cocoa's purest milk detains
The western pilgrim's staff;
Where rain in clasping boughs inclos'd,
And vines with oranges dispos'd,
Embow'r the social laugh.

Now labour his reward receives,
For Adoration counts his sheaves

[1] the lynx.

[2] "There is a large quadruped that preys upon fish, and provides himself with a species of timber for that purpose, with which he is very handy."—*Smart's note* (*ed. 1765*).

[3] Halcyone was turned into a bird, and during the seven days before and after the shortest day in the year, while she was breeding, there always prevailed calm at sea; hence, "halcyon days."

[4] silverlings (not in *N.E.D.*).

[5] Crusians, a species of fish of a deep yellow colour, closely allied to the carp.

To peace, her bounteous prince;
The nectarine his strong tint imbibes,
And apples of ten thousand tribes,
And quick peculiar quince.

The wealthy crops of whit'ning rice,
'Mongst thyine[1] woods and groves of spice,
For Adoration grow;
And, marshall'd in the fenced land,
The peaches and pomegranates stand,
Where wild carnations blow.

The laurels with the winter strive;
The crocus burnishes alive
Upon the snow-clad earth:
For Adoration myrtles stay
To keep the garden from dismay,
And bless the sight from dearth.

The pheasant shows his pompous neck;
And ermine, jealous of a speck,
With fear eludes offence:
The sable, with his glossy pride,
For Adoration is descried,
Where frosts the wave condense.

The cheerful holly, pensive yew,
And holy thorn, their trim renew;
The squirrel hoards his nuts:
All creatures batten o'er their stores,
And careful nature all her doors
For Adoration shuts.

For Adoration, David's psalms
Lift up the heart to deeds of alms;
And he, who kneels and chants,
Prevails his passions to control,
Finds meat and med'cine to the soul,
Which for translation pants.

[1] "And all thyine wood."—Revelations, xviii, 12. "Citron wood," in the Revised Version.

For Adoration, beyond match,
The scholar bulfinch aims to catch
 The soft flute's iv'ry touch;
And, careless on the hazel spray,
The daring redbreast keeps at bay
 The damsel's greedy clutch.

For Adoration, in the skies,
The Lord's philosopher espies
 The dog, the ram, and rose;
The planets ring, Orion's sword;
Nor is his greatness less ador'd
 In the vile worm that glows.

For Adoration on the strings
The western breezes work their wings,[1]
 The captive ear to soothe.—
Hark! 'tis a voice—how still, and small—
That makes the cataracts to fall,
 Or bids the sea be smooth.

For Adoration, incense comes
From bezoar,[2] and Arabian gums;
 And on the civet's[3] fur.
But as for prayer, or ere it faints,
Far better is the breath of saints
 Than galbanum and myrrh.

For Adoration from the down,
Of dam'sins[4] to th' anana's[5] crown,
 God sends to tempt the taste;
And while the luscious zest invites,
The sense, that in the scene delights,
 Commands desire be chaste.

[1] Æolian harp.—*Smart's note.*

[2] Bezoar is literally a counter-poison or antidote; then the name was given to various substances formerly held as antidotes, as a concretion found in the stomach or intestines of some animal; then to alleged stones or concretions of various kinds, usually in ignorance of its original meaning, as here.—*N.E.D.*

[3] An animal ranking in size and appearance between the fox and the weasel, which yields a secretion, called by the same name, used in perfumery.—*N.E.D.*

[4] damsons. [5] the pineapple.

For Adoration, all the paths
Of grace are open, all the baths
 Of purity refresh;
And all the rays of glory beam
To deck the man of God's esteem,
 Who triumphs o'er the flesh.

For Adoration, in the dome
Of Christ the sparrows find an home;
 And on his olives perch:
The swallow also dwells with thee,
O man of God's humility,
 Within his Saviour Church.

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,
And drops upon the leafy limes;
 Sweet Hermon's fragrant air:[1]
Sweet is the lily's silver bell,
And sweet the wakeful tapers smell
 That watch for early pray'r.

Sweet the young nurse with love intense,
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence;
 Sweet when the lost arrive:
Sweet the musician's ardour beats,
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,
 The choicest flow'rs to hive.

Sweeter in all the strains of love
The language of thy turtle dove
 Pair'd to thy swelling chord;
Sweeter with ev'ry grace endu'd
The glory of thy gratitude,
 Respir'd unto the Lord.

Strong is the horse upon his speed;
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,[2]
 Which makes at once his game:

[1] A mountain in Judea. See Psalms, cxxxiii, 3: "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion."
[2] the kite.

Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;
Strong thro' the turbulent profound
 Shoots xiphias[1] to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal
His eye-ball—like a bastion's mole
 His chest against the foes:
Strong, the gier-eagle[2] on his sail,
Strong against tide, th' enormous whale
 Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air,
And in the sea, the man of pray'r,
 And far beneath the tide;
And in the seat to faith assign'd,
Where ask is have, where seek is find,
 Where knock is open wide.

Beauteous the fleet before the gale;
Beauteous the multitudes in mail,
 Rank'd arms and crested heads:
Beauteous the garden's umbrage mild,
Walk, water, meditated wild,
 And all the bloomy beds.

Beauteous the moon full on the lawn;
And beauteous, when the veil's withdrawn,
 The virgin to her spouse:
Beauteous the temple deck'd and fill'd,
When to the heav'n of heav'ns they build
 Their heart-directed vows.

Beauteous, yea beauteous more than these,
The shepherd king upon his knees,
 For his momentous trust;
With wish of infinite conceit,
For man, beast, mute, the small and great,
 And prostrate dust to dust.

[1] the sword-fish.—*Smart's note.*
[2] A species of vulture. See Leviticus, xi, 18.

Precious the bounteous widow's mite;
And precious, for extreme delight,
 The largess from the churl:[1]
Precious the ruby's blushing blaze,
And alba's[2] blest imperial rays,
 And pure cerulean pearl.

Precious the penitential tear;
And precious is the sigh sincere,
 Acceptable to God:
And precious are the winning flow'rs,
In gladsome Israel's feast of bow'rs,
 Bound on the hallow'd sod.

More precious that diviner part
Of David, ev'n the Lord's own heart,
 Great, beautiful, and new:
In all things where it was intent,
In all extremes, in each event,
 Proof—answ'ring true to true.

Glorious the sun in mid career;
Glorious th' assembled fires appear;
 Glorious the comet's train;
Glorious the trumpet and alarm;
Glorious th' almighty stretch'd-out arm;
 Glorious th' enraptur'd main:

Glorious the northern lights a-stream;
Glorious the song, when God's the theme;
 Glorious the thunder's roar;
Glorious hosannah from the den;
Glorious the catholic amen;
 Glorious the martyr's gore:

Glorious—more glorious, is the crown
Of Him that brought salvation down

[1] [I] Samuel xxv, 18.—*Smart's note.*

[2] "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—Revelations, ii, 17.

By meekness, call'd thy son;
Thou that stupendous truth believ'd,
And now the matchless deed's achiev'd,
Determined, dared, and done.

(1762–63)

Oliver Goldsmith

1729(?)–1774

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, the son of the Reverend Charles Goldsmith, assistant rector of Kilkenny West, and "passing rich with forty pounds a year," was born on November 10, 1728, 1729, or 1730, at Pallas, in Longford, Ireland. A little later the father got a much better living at Lissoy, and life was happier for the Goldsmith brood. In 1744 Oliver was enrolled as a sizar, or servant, in Trinity College, Dublin, and took his B.A. in February, 1749, with the lowest rating in his class. In 1752 he left Ireland to study medicine at Edinburgh University (so he said) and two years later persuaded his benevolent uncle Contarine that he would gain much by work in the University of Leyden. But in 1755 he left Leyden and proceeded to travel all over Europe—how, we can only guess. In the next year he landed in Dover with a mythical medical degree and no money, and succeeded in getting some hack-reviewing for *The Monthly Review*. He had expected to go to the Coromandel coast as a physician but was prevented from doing so by the fighting between the French and English for supremacy in India, which extended from 1758 to 1761. Meanwhile he was writing a "Life of Voltaire," "An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe," and essays for Wilkie's *The Bee*, which ran for only eight numbers. In 1760 he began contributing to *The Ledger* his "Chinese Letters," which were published as "The Citizen of the World" in 1762. Then he brought out his "Life of Richard Nash, Esq.," which at once became popular. The next year he was made a charter member of the Literary Club, and he was one of a distinguished company including Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, and Garrick. Johnson saved him from arrest for debt by selling for £60 "The Vicar of Wakefield," which the great Cham read in manuscript and rightly admired. The same year (1764) Goldsmith published his poem, "The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society," and his reputation was made. In 1767 he submitted his "Good-Natured Man" to Garrick, who did not like it, and then to Colman, who on January 29, 1768, produced it at Covent Garden; the play earned for Goldsmith between four and five hundred pounds. He proceeded to enjoy himself and as a consequence was soon at his hack work again, doing a "History of Rome" (1769), a "Grecian History" (published in 1776), and "Animated Nature" (1769–1774).

But he did something finer far than hack work when he wrote "The Deserted Village: a Poem" in 1770 and "The Haunch of Venison" in 1771. His supreme triumph came when Colman produced "She Stoops to Conquer; or the Mistakes of a Night," on March 15, 1773, and earned for Goldsmith about five hundred pounds. In 1774 he wrote his "Retaliation," a reply to Garrick's epitaph:

> Here lies Poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

He died on April 4, 1774, and his body was laid in the burying ground of the Temple church. The Latin inscription on his monument in Westminster Abbey was written in 1776 by Johnson.

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Elegy on Madam Blaize

Good people all, with one accord,
 Lament for Madam Blaize,
Who never wanted a good word—
 From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom pass'd her door,
 And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor,—
 Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighbourhood to please,
 With manners wond'rous winning,
She never follow'd wicked ways,—
 Unless when she was sinning.

At church, in silks and satins new,
 With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumber'd in her pew,—
 But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
 By twenty beaux and more;
The king himself has follow'd her,—
 When she has walk'd before.

But now her wealth and fin'ry fled,
 Her hangers-on cut short all;
Her doctors found, when she was dead,—
 Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament, in sorrow sore,
 For Kent-street well may say,
That had she liv'd a twelvemonth more,—
 She had not died to-day.

(1759)

The Traveller

Or, A Prospect of Society

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheldt, or wandering Po;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian[1] boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;
Or where Campania's plain[2] forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother[3] turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a length'ning chain.

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend;
Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their ev'ning fire;
Blest that abode, where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair;
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,
My prime of life in wand'ring spent, and care,
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And, plac'd on high above the storm's career,

[1] Carinthia, a province in western Austria, which Goldsmith visited in 1755.

[2] the Campagna of Rome.

[3] Henry Goldsmith, to whom the poem was dedicated, "the earliest friend" of l. 11.

Look downward where an hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.
When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good, which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glitt'ring towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd;
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flow'ry vale;
For me your tributary stores combine;
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine!
As some lone miser visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still:
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleas'd with each good that Heaven to man supplies:
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd,
Where my worn soul, each wand'ring hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.
But where to find that happiest spot below,
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease;
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home.

And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
As different good, by Art or Nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings even.
Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at Labour's earnest call;
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's[1] cliffs as Arno's shelvy side;
And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down.
From Art more various are the blessings sent;
Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest.
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.
Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the favourite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends;
Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.
 But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies:
Here for a while my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.
 Far to the right, where Apennine ascends
Bright as the summer, Italy extends;
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene.
 Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,

[1] Idria (not Idra) is a small town in the province of Carniola, northwest of Trieste. Arno is a river in Tuscany that flows past Florence and Pisa.

That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives that blossom but to die:
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid[1] wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.
But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign,
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And e'en in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind,
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs, not far remov'd the date,
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;
At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies;
The canvas glow'd beyond e'en Nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave;
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.
Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade;
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd,

[1] cool

The sports of children satisfy the child;
Each nobler aim, represt by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:
As in those domes, where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defac'd by time and tottering in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display,
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.
No product here the barren hills afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword;
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter ling'ring chills the lap of May;
No Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.
Yet still, even here, content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep,
Or drives his venturous plow-share to the steep,
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage[1] into day.
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys

[1] wild beast.

His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board:
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.
 Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And even those ills, that round his mansion rise,
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more.
 Such are the charms to barren states assign'd;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd.
Yet let them only share the praises due,
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies,
That first excites desire, and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
Their level life is but a smould'ring fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
 But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow:
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, the manners run;
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cow'ring on the nest;

But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispers'd, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.
To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain.
Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous pow'r,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,[1]
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore.
So blest a life these thoughtless realms display,
Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temper here:
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or even imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current; paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land;
From courts, to camps, to cottages it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleas'd, they give to get esteem,
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise;
For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought;
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence Ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;

[1] Of or pertaining to bodily movement, esp. dancing.—*N E.D.*

Here Vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze[1] with copper lace;
Here beggar Pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm-connected bulwark seems to grow;
Spreads its long arms amidst the wat'ry roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore:
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,
Even liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires of old!
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;

[1] coarse woolen cloth.

War in each breast, and freedom on each brow;
How much unlike the sons of Britain now!
 Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian[1] pride,
And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspis[2] glide.
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,
Extremes are only in the master's mind!
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye;
I see the lords of human kind pass by,
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagin'd right, above control,
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.
 Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here,
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear;
Too blest, indeed, were such without alloy,
But foster'd even by Freedom ills annoy:
That independence Britons prize too high,
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie;
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd;
Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,
Repress ambition struggles round her shore,
Till over-wrought, the general system feels
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.
 Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,

[1] Arcadia was a province in southern Greece, and because of its beauty it became a name for an ideal pastoral land, as in Sidney's "Arcadia."
[2] A river in India, the modern Jhelum. Marvellous stories were current about it among the Romans, so that Horace called it *fabulosus*.

Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown;
Till time may come, when stript of all her charms,
The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die.

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great;
Ye Powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire;
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt, or favour's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!
I only would repress them to secure:
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil;
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach,
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast-approaching danger warms:
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free;
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law;
The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,
Pillag'd from slaves to purchase slaves at home;
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart;
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour,
When first ambition struck at regal power:
And thus polluting honour in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchang'd for useless ore?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste?
Seen Opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern Depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose,
In barren solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen, at Pleasure's lordly call,
The smiling long-frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
Forc'd from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main;
Where wild Oswego[1] spreads her swamps around,
And Niagàra stuns with thund'ring sound?
Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways,
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go,[2]
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.
Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind:
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings, or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,

[1] A river in New York State that flows into Lake Ontario.
[2] Lines 420, 429–434, 437, 438 were written by Dr. Johnson.

Our own felicity we make or find:
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted ax, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown,[1] and Damiens' bed of steel,[2]
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.

(1764)

Song

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from ev'ry eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is, to die.

(1764)

The Deserted Village

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paus'd on every charm,

[1] It was George Doza, not Luke, who was punished for his rebellion in Hungary in 1514 by being crowned with a red hot iron crown.

[2] Robert François Damiens was tortured in 1757 for attempting to assassinate Louis XV of France. "An iron bed . . . was prepared for him and in this he was fastened with chains. The torture was again applied and a physician ordered to attend to see what degree of pain he could support" (Smollett's "History of England").

The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
The dancing pair that simply[1] sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless[2] of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,[3]
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers, in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,

[1] in simple fashion. [2] unaware. [3] plain.

Far, far away, thy children leave the land.
 Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade:
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.
 A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light Labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
 But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
 Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
 In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant[1] mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy[2] spring;

[1] free from care. [2] Abounding in shallow pools or puddles.—*N.E.D.*

She, wretched matron, forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;[1]
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place;
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,

[1] The salary of Rev. Henry Goldsmith (See Goldsmith's Dedication of "The Traveller").

Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns, dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest;
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declar'd how much he knew:
'T was certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides[1] presage,

[1]Terms of court, the divisions of the legal year; the tides were the times and seasons of the year; as, Christmastide, Eastertide.

And even the story ran that he could gauge.[1]
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For even though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around,
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
Where gray-beard Mirth and smiling Toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendours of that festive place:
The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules,[2] the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.
Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,

[1] *measure the capacity of a keg or barrel.*

[2] The twelve rules ascribed to Charles I are as follows: (1) urge no healths; (2) profane no divine ordinances; (3) touch no state matters; (4) reveal no *secrets*; (5) *pick no quarrels*; (6) *make no comparisons*; (7) maintain no ill opinions; (8) keep no bad company; (9) encourage no vice; (10) make no long meals; (11) repeat no grievances; (12) lay no wagers.

Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd:
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies:
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure, all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes:
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In Nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist[1] plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.[2]
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!

[1] artisan.
[2] Torches were carried by "link-boys" to guide foot-travelers through the insufficiently lighted streets.

Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;[1]
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
 Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
 Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama[2] murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
 Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away;

[1] the hawthorn bush. [2] the Altamaha, a river in Georgia.

When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
 O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
 Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes plac'd above,

And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs,[1] or Pambamarca's side,[2]
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

(1770)

The Haunch of Venison

A Poetical Epistle to Lord Clare[3]

Thanks, my lord, for your venison, for finer or fatter
Never rang'd in a forest, or smok'd in a platter;
The haunch was a picture for painters to study,
The fat was so white, and the lean was so ruddy;
Though my stomach was sharp, I could scarce help regretting

[1] Tornea river flows into the Gulf of Bothnia; Lake Tornea is in the north of Sweden. See Thomson's "Winter," l. 887.

[2] Pambamarca is a mountain in Ecuador.

[3] Robert Nugent (1702–1788) was created Viscount Clare in 1766 and Earl Nugent in 1776.

To spoil such a delicate picture by eating;
I had thoughts, in my chambers, to place it in view,
To be shown to my friends as a piece of virtù;
As in some Irish houses, where things are so so,
One gammon of bacon hangs up for a show:
But, for eating a rasher of what they take pride in,
They'd as soon think of eating the pan it is fried in.
But hold—let me pause—don't I hear you pronounce
This tale of the bacon a damnable bounce?[1]
Well, suppose it a bounce—sure a poet may try,
By a bounce now and then, to get courage to fly.
But, my lord, it's no bounce: I protest in my turn,
It's a truth—and your lordship may ask Mr. Byrne.[2]
To go on with my tale—as I gaz'd on the haunch,
I thought of a friend that was trusty and staunch;
So I cut it, and sent it to Reynolds undrest,
To paint it, or eat it, just as he lik'd best.
Of the neck and the breast I had next to dispose;
'Twas a neck and a breast that might rival Monroe's:[3]
But in parting with these I was puzzled again,
With the how, and the who, and the where, and the when.
There's Howard, and Coley, and H—rth, and Hiff,[4]
I think they love venison—I know they love beef.
There's my countryman Higgins[5]—oh! let him alone,
For making a blunder, or picking a bone.
But hang it—to poets who seldom can eat
Your very good mutton's a very good treat;
Such dainties to them their health it might hurt,
It's like sending them ruffles, when wanting a shirt.
While thus I debated, in reverie centred,
An acquaintance, a friend as he call'd himself, enter'd;
An under-bred, fine-spoken fellow was he,
And he smil'd as he look'd at the ven'son and me.
"What have we got here?—Why this is good eating!
Your own I suppose—or is it in waiting?"

[1] A loud or audacious boast.—*N.E.D.*
[2] a nephew of Lord Clare, his sister's son.
[3] Dolly Monroe, a famous Irish beauty.
[4] Is this Gorges E. Howard (1715–86), a minor dramatist? Coley is George Colman, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre. H-rth is William Hogarth, the painter. Hiff is Paul Hifferman, a protegé of Goldsmith's.
[5] Captain Higgins.

"Why, whose should it be?" cried I with a flounce;
"I get these things often";—but that was a bounce:
"Some lords, my acquaintance, that settle the nation,
Are pleas'd to be kind—but I hate ostentation."
"If that be the case then," cried he, very gay,
"I'm glad I have taken this house in my way.
To-morrow you take a poor dinner with me;
No words—I insist on't—precisely at three:
We'll have Johnson, and Burke; all the wits will be there;
My acquaintance is slight, or I'd ask my Lord Clare.
And, now that I think on't, as I am a sinner!
We wanted this venison to make out the dinner.
What say you—a pasty? it shall, and it must,
And my wife, little Kitty, is famous for crust.
Here, porter—this ven'son with me to Mile-end;
No stirring—I beg—my dear friend—my dear friend!"
Thus snatching his hat, he brush'd off like the wind,
And the porter and eatables follow'd behind.
Left alone to reflect, having emptied my shelf,
And "nobody with me at sea but myself";
Though I could not help thinking my gentleman hasty,
Yet Johnson, and Burke, and a good ven'son pasty,
Were things that I never dislik'd in my life,
Though clogg'd with a coxcomb, and Kitty his wife.
So next day in due splendour to make my approach,
I drove to his door in my own hackney-coach.
When come to the place where we all were to dine,
(A chair-lumber'd closet just twelve feet by nine)
My friend bade me welcome, but struck me quite dumb
With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come;
"For I knew it," he cried: "both eternally fail,
The one with his speeches, and t'other with Thrale;[1]
But no matter, I'll warrant we'll make up the party
With two full as clever, and ten times as hearty.
The one is a Scotchman, the other a Jew,
They're both of them merry, and authors like you;
The one writes the Snarler, the other the Scourge;
Some think he writes Cinna—he owns to Panurge."
While thus he describ'd them by trade and by name,
They enter'd, and dinner was serv'd as they came.

[1] The Thrales were very great friends of Dr. Johnson

At the top a fried liver and bacon were seen;
At the bottom was tripe, in a swinging tureen;
At the sides there was spinach and pudding made hot;
In the middle a place where the pasty—was not.
Now, my lord, as for tripe, it's my utter aversion,
And your bacon I hate like a Turk or a Persian;
So there I sat stuck, like a horse in a pound,
While the bacon and liver went merrily round:
But what vex'd me most was that d——d Scottish rogue,
With his long-winded speeches, his smiles, and his brogue,
And, "Madam," quoth he, "may this bit be my poison,
A prettier dinner I never set eyes on;
Pray a slice of your liver, though may I be curst,
But I've eat of your tripe till I'm ready to burst."
"The tripe!" quoth the Jew, with his chocolate cheek,
"I could dine on this tripe seven days in a week:
I like these here dinners so pretty and small;
But your friend there, the doctor, eats nothing at all."
"O-oh!" quoth my friend, "he'll come on in a trice,
He's keeping a corner for something that's nice:
There's a pasty"—"a pasty!" repeated the Jew;
"I don't care if I keep a corner for't too."
"What the de'il, mon, a pasty!" re-echo'd the Scot;
"Though splitting, I'll still keep a corner for that."
"We'll all keep a corner," the lady cried out;
"We'll all keep a corner," was echo'd about.
While thus we resolv'd, and the pasty delay'd,
With looks that quite petrified, enter'd the maid:
A visage so sad, and so pale with affright,
Wak'd Priam in drawing his curtains by night.
But we quickly found out (for who could mistake her?)
That she came with some terrible news from the baker:
And so it fell out, for that negligent sloven
Had shut out the pasty on shutting his oven.
Sad Philomel thus—but let similes drop—
And now that I think on't, the story may stop.
To be plain, my good lord, it's but labour misplac'd,
To send such good verses to one of your taste;
You've got an odd something—a kind of discerning—
A relish—a taste—sicken'd over by learning;
At least, it's your temper, as very well known,

That you think very slightly of all that's your own:
So, perhaps, in your habits of thinking amiss,
You may make a mistake, and think slightly of this.

(1771)

Retaliation

Of old, when Scarron[1] his companions invited,
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united;
If our landlord supplies us with beef, and with fish,
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish:
Our Dean[2] shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;
Our Burke[3] shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;
Our Will[4] shall be wild-fowl, of excellent flavour,
And Dick[5] with his pepper shall heighten their savour:
Our Cumberland's[6] sweet-bread its place shall obtain,
And Douglas[7] is pudding, substantial and plain:
Our Garrick's[8] a salad, for in him we see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree:
To make out the dinner, full certain I am,
That Ridge[9] is anchovy, and Reynolds[10] is lamb;
That Hickey's[11] a capon, and, by the same rule,
Magnanimous Goldsmith, a gooseberry fool.
At a dinner so various, at such a repast,
Who'd not be a glutton, and stick to the last:
Here, waiter! more wine, let me sit while I'm able,
Till all my companions sink under the table;
Then, with chaos and blunders encircling my head,
Let me ponder, and tell what I think of the dead.

Here lies the good Dean, re-united to earth,

[1] Paul Scarron (1610–1660), a French writer of plays and burlesques.
[2] Thomas Barnard, Dean of Derry in Ireland (1728–1806), member of the Literary Club.
[3] Edmund Burke (1729–1797), the statesman.
[4] William Burke, Edmund's cousin.
[5] Richard Burke, Edmund's brother.
[6] Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), a popular writer of sentimental plays.
[7] John Douglas, Canon of Windsor.
[8] David Garrick (1717–1779), the greatest actor of his time.
[9] John Ridge, an Irish barrister.
[10] Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92), the portrait painter.
[11] Tom Hickey, an Irish attorney.

Who mixed reason with pleasure, and wisdom with mirth:
If he had any faults, he has left us in doubt,
At least, in six weeks, I could not find 'em out;
Yet some have declar'd, and it can't be denied 'em,
That Sly-boots was cursedly cunning to hide 'em.

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
Who, born for the Universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend[1] to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit:
For a patriot, too cool; for a drudge, disobedient;
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
In short, 't was his fate, unemploy'd, or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Here lies honest William, whose heart was a mint,
While the owner ne'er knew half the good that was in't;
The pupil of impulse, it forc'd him along,
His conduct still right, with his argument wrong;
Still aiming at honour, yet fearing to roam,
The coachman was tipsy, the chariot drove home;
Would you ask for his merits? alas! he had none;
What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his own.

Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at,
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!
What spirits were his, what wit and what whim,
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb;
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
That we wish'd him full ten times a day at Old Nick;
But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
The Terence of England, the mender of hearts;
A flattering painter, who made it his care

[1] a Whig member of Parliament, later Lord Sydney.

To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,
And Comedy wonders at being so fine;
Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,
Or rather like Tragedy giving a rout.
His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud;
And coxcombs, alike in their failings alone,
Adopting his portraits, are pleas'd with their own.
Say, where has our poet this malady caught?
Or wherefore his characters thus without fault?
Say, was it that vainly directing his view
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?
 Here Douglas retires from his toils to relax,
The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks:
Come all ye quack bards, and ye quacking divines,
Come and dance on the spot where your tyrant reclines;
When Satire and Censure encircled his throne,
I fear'd for your safety, I fear'd for my own;
But now he is gone, and we want a detector,
Our Dodds[1] shall be pious, our Kenricks[2] shall lecture;
Macpherson[3] write bombast, and call it a style,
Our Townshend make speeches, and I shall compile;
New Lauders[4] and Bowers[5] the Tweed shall cross over,
No countryman living their tricks to discover;
Detection her taper shall quench to a spark,
And Scotchman meet Scotchman, and cheat in the dark.
 Here lies David Garrick, describe me, who can,
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;
As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine:
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,

[1] Dr. William Dodd, whom Johnson tried in vain to save from the gallows, to which he had been condemned for forging a note for £4200 some three years after the publication of this poem.

[2] William Kenrick, a theatrical critic, and one of Goldsmith's bitterest foes.

[3] James Macpherson (1736–96), the author of the so-called Ossianic poems.

[4] William Lauder, a Scotch literary impostor.

[5] Archibald Bower, another Scotchman of unsavoury reputation.

The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'T was only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day.
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick,
If they were not his own by finessing and trick,
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleas'd he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame;
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind:
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys,[1] and Woodfalls[2] so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you rais'd,
When he was be-Roscius'd,[3] and you were be-prais'd!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel, and mix with the skies!
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will;
Old Shakespeare, receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens[4] be his Kellys above.
Here Hickey reclines, a most blunt, pleasant creature,
And slander itself must allow him good nature;
He cherish'd his friend, and he relish'd a bumper;
Yet one fault he had, and that one was a thumper.
Perhaps you may ask if the man was a miser:
I answer, No, no; for he always was wiser;
Too courteous, perhaps, or obligingly flat;
His very worst foe can't accuse him of that.
Perhaps he confided in men as they go,
And so was too foolishly honest; Ah no!

[1] Hugh Kelly (1739–77), a writer of sentimental plays.
[2] William Woodfall, the publisher of *The Morning Chronicle.*
[3] an allusion to Churchill's "Rosciad." See p. 634.
[4] Francis Beaumont and Ben Jonson, the Elizabethan dramatists.

Then what was his failing? come tell it, and burn ye.
He was—could he help it?—a special attorney.
Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart:
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judg'd without skill, he was still hard of hearing;
When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Corregios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet,[1] and only took snuff.

(1774)

[1] Sir Joshua used an ear-trumpet.

Michael Bruce

1746–1767

MICHAEL BRUCE, the son of Alexander Bruce, a weaver, and also an elder in the seceding church, was born at Kinnesswood, on the eastern shore of Lochleven, Kinross-shire, Scotland. At the age of eleven, like many Scotch boys of promise, he resolved to be a minister, and when five years later his father received a bequest of about eleven pounds, this sum was devoted to the son's education. In 1762 he enrolled in Edinburgh University, and for three sessions he took quite a full curriculum. Then he left the university (1765) and became a schoolmaster at Gairney Bridge in Kinross-shire. He had twenty-eight pupils at two shillings apiece per quarter, and he got his board free as he rotated among the parents of his scholars. The next year (1766) he got a new school at Forrest Mill in Clackmannanshire. In this year he finished "Lochleven," and the next year he wrote his "Elegy." On July 5 or 6, 1767, he was found dead in his bed at home. In 1770 his classmate John Logan brought out an edition of his work, entitled "Poems on Several Occasions."

EDITIONS

Lochleven and Other Poems by Michael Bruce. With Life of the Author from Original Sources, by William Mackelvie. 1837.

The Works of Michael Bruce. Edited, with a Memoir and Notes, by A. Grosart. 1865.

The Works of Michael Bruce. Edited by W. Stephen. 1895.

Life and Complete Works of Michael Bruce. By John G. Barnet. 1927.

Ode to the Cuckoo

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the wood,
Attendant on the spring!
Now heav'n repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

Soon as the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:

Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flow'rs,
When heav'n is fill'd with music sweet
Of birds among the bow'rs.

The schoolboy, wand'ring in the wood
To pull the flow'rs so gay,
Starts, thy curious voice to hear,
And imitates thy lay,

Soon as the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fly'st thy vocal vale,
An annual guest, in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bow'r is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

Alas, sweet bird! not so my fate,
Dark scowling skies I see
Fast gathering round, and fraught with woe
And wintry years to me.

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee:
We'd make, with social wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring.[1]

(Publ. 1770)

[1] Not in 1781 or 1837 editions.

James Beattie

1735–1803

JAMES BEATTIE, the son of a shopkeeper and small farmer, was born at Laurencekirk, Kincardine, Scotland, on October 25, 1735. In 1749 he entered Marischal College, Aberdeen, where he obtained a bursary. He received his M.A. in 1753 and became a schoolmaster and parish clerk of Fardoun, near his home. He came into public notice through his contributions to the *Scots Magazine.* In 1758 he was appointed master of the grammar school of Aberdeen; two years later he was given the chair of moral philosophy and logic in Marischal College, which he held for thirty years. He became a member of the "Wise Club," made up of professors who once a fortnight met in a tavern for literary discussion and profit. In 1761 he brought out his "Original Poems and Translations," some taken from the *Scots Magazine* and others being more recent work. This was his first published volume. On a visit to London in 1763 he met Pope at Twickenham, and two years later he met Gray when the latter was on a visit to the Earl of Strathmore's seat at Glammis Castle. In 1767 he married Mary Dunn—who later showed her first symptoms of insanity when she arranged a row of china jars over the parlor door in such a way and at such a time that they would fall on her husband's head when he entered; there was method in her madness. In keeping with his professorial position and dignity, Beattie brought out his "Essay on Truth," which, being of no philosophical value, went through five large editions in four years as a guide for those who would acquire a facile intellectuality. In 1771 he published anonymously the first book of "The Minstrel" and had the satisfaction of an immediate success; three years later the second volume appeared. In 1773 his fortunes flourished: Oxford conferred upon him the LL.D. degree; he was presented to the King, who gave him a pension of £300 a year; and he declined an offer of the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh! In 1777 a new edition of "The Minstrel" with other poems was published. His later years were given to religious and philosophical work of doubtful value: "Evidences of the Christian Religion" (vol. 1 in 1786 and vol. 2 in 1793); and "Elements of Moral Science," in 1790. On the death of his son, in 1794, he brought out as a memorial of the deepest affection, "Essays and Fragments in Prose and Verse of James Hay Beattie"

for private circulation. This was later published for sale, with a touching biographical sketch of his son. In 1799 he was stricken with the palsy, and, after great suffering, succumbed to it on August 18, 1803, in Aberdeen.

EDITIONS

Poetical Works of James Beattie. Edited, with a Life, by A. Dyce. 1831; later editions.
Poetical Works of Beattie and Collins. Edited by T. Miller. 1846.
Poetical Works of Beattie, Blair, and Falconer. Edited by G Gilfillan. 1854.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Forbes, Sir William: "An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie." 2 vols. 1824.
Perry, T. S.: "Gray, Collins, and Beattie," in *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1880.
Walker, H.: "Three Centuries of Scottish Literature." 1893.
Forbes, Margaret: "Beattie and His Friends." 1904.

The Minstrel

Or, The Progress of Genius.

BOOK I

THERE lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie;
A nation famed for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough he never sway'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living water from the rock;
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent

Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went.

From labour health, from health contentment springs;
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envied not, he never thought of kings;
Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,
Which chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy;
Nor Fate his calm and humble hopes beguiled;
He mourn'd no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phœbe smiled,
And her alone he loved, and loved her from a child. . . .

The wight whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this simple pair.
His birth no oracle or seer foretold:
No prodigy appear'd in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of Edwin's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye,
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaud, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.
Silent when glad; affectionate, though shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad;
And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbors stared and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad;
Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil he ever fled;
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped,
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or where the maze of some bewilder'd stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,

There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

Th' exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the woe of any living thing,
By trap or net; by arrow, or by sling;
These he detested, those he scorn'd to wield:
He wish'd to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

Lo! where the stripling, rapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no: he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while.
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.—
But, lo! the sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean smile.

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:
Nor less, than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling sheen.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control. . . .

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening-star,
Lingering and listening, wander'd down the vale.
There would he dream of graves, and corses pale,
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first, a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of night.

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold,
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanor bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-rob'd minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;

The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-colour'd rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze. . . .

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheep-fold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crown'd with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle[1] in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tower.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme!
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;[2]
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody. . . .

[1] the turtle-dove.

[2] Pyrrho was the founder of the Skeptical or Pyrrhonian School of philosophy. Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), a celebrated philosopher, about whom false stories were circulated that he and his disciples were addicted to the grossest sensuality.

Oft when the winter storm had ceas'd to rave,
He roam'd the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where midst the changeful scenery ever new
Fancy a thousand wondrous forms descries
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthusiast oft would take his way,
Listening, with pleasing dread, to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array,
When sulphurous clouds roll'd on th' autumnal day,
Even then he hasten'd from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er Heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

Responsive to the lively pipe, when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclined,
Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind,
Ah then, all jollity seem'd noise and folly,
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refined;
Ah, what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compared of heavenly melancholy? . . .

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime, or dreadful, in earth, sea, or sky,
By chance, or search, was offer'd to his view,
He scann'd with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From Gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Rous'd him, still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, though long by penury controll'd,
And solitude, his soul her graces 'gan unfold.

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,[1]
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer[2] sends the season bland,
And in their northern caves the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl'd; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crown'd;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while,
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But on this verse if Montagu[3] should smile,
New strains ere long shall animate thy frame.
And her applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

(1766–71)

[1] Lapland, in the north of Sweden and Finland.
[2] The sun enters Cancer on June 21.
[3] Mrs. Montagu was a warm friend of Beattie.

Lady Anne Lindsay Barnard

1750–1825

LADY ANNE LINDSAY, the eldest daughter of James Lindsay, the fifth Earl of Balcarres, was born in Fifeshire on December 8, 1750. In 1771 she published "Auld Robin Gray" anonymously and did not acknowledge it till 1823. She met Dr. Johnson when he visited Edinburgh on his way to the Hebrides. In 1793 she married Andrew Barnard, the son of the Bishop of Limerick, and with him proceeded to the Cape of Good Hope, where he was Colonial Secretary under Lord Macartney. On the death of her husband in 1807, she returned home and settled in London, where her house in Berkeley Square was a literary centre. She had also "the dubious honour of winning the lifelong attachment of the Prince Regent" (D.N.B.). She died on May 6, 1825.

EDITIONS

Ancient and Modern Scottish Poems. 2 vols. Edited by D. Herd. 1776.

Auld Robin Gray, a Ballad. By the Rt. Honourable Lady Anne Barnard . . . Edited by Sir Walter Scott. 1825.

Auld Robin Gray

WHEN the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye[1] at hame,
And a' the warld to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman[2] lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving a croun he had naething else beside;
To make the croun a pund, young Jamie gaid to sea;
And the croun and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown[3] awa';

[1] cows. [2] husband. [3] stolen.

My mother she fell sick,—and my Jamie at the sea—
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin;
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e
Said, "Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!"

My heart it said nay; I look'd for Jamie back;
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack—why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to cry, Wae's me!

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak;
But she look'd in my face till my heart was like to break:
They gi'ed him my hand, tho' my heart was in the sea;
Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith,—for I couldna think it he,
Till he said, "I'm come hame to marry thee."

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say;
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away:
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
And why was I born to say, Wae's me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin;
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin;
But I'll do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For auld Robin Gray he is kind unto me.

(1771)

Thomas Chatterton

1752–1770

THOMAS CHATTERTON, the posthumous son of a poor and worthless schoolmaster, was born at Bristol on November 20, 1752. His paternal ancestors had been hereditary sextons of St. Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol, and his uncle was the present holder of this position. Until he was half through his seventh year, he was regarded by his mother as "little better than an absolute fool," but when he saw some illuminated capitals on an old French musical folio, he woke up and read everything he could lay his hands on. He had the run of St. Mary Redcliffe and through it came in touch with ecclesiastical mediævalism. His first poem, "On the Last Epiphany, or Christ Coming to Judgment," was printed in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* in 1763. He consumed a copy of Speght's blackletter Chaucer, and in 1764 he published in the same magazine his poem, "The Churchwarden and the Apparition," and a satire, "Apostate Will." About this time he mentions certain old manuscripts from Canynge's coffer in the muniment room of the church. He now began using Bailey's and Kersey's dictionaries for old English words. The Rowley romance took form in his mind in 1765, when he conceived of Rowley as an imaginary secular priest of St. John's church and as the friend and confessor of Mayor William Canynge, of Bristol. In 1767 he was bound apprentice to John Lambert, a Bristol attorney, with board and lodgings free, but no salary, with very long hours and miserable living conditions. He furnished a pewterer of Bristol, named Burgum, with a bogus pedigree and a poem as by one of his mythical ancestors, "The Romaunte of the Cnyghte," by John de Burgham, written in 1320; for all which the grateful Burgum gave him ten shillings, paid in instalments. On the opening of the new bridge at Bristol in 1768 he produced a poem which he said had been written at the first opening of the bridge in 1248, the work of his alleged poet, Thomas Rowley. Other poems by Rowley followed—"The Battle of Hastings," "The Bristowe Tragedie: or, the Dethe of Sir Charles Bawdin," and the "Song to Ælla." He wrote to Dodsley, offering poems in 1768–69, but so far as is known his offers were unheeded. Then he tried Horace Walpole, enclosing his poems and a manuscript on "The Ryse of Peyncteynge in Englande" as possibly of interest to the author of "Anecdotes of Painting." Walpole replied on March 28, 1769, and

Chatterton was encouraged to tell him who he was and his need for help in his writing. Meanwhile Walpole consulted Gray and Mason, who declared the works forgeries, and then he showed Chatterton he had no further interest in him. It was only by repeated demands that the poet even succeeded in getting back his manuscripts. His work meanwhile under Lambert had become so irksome that he resigned and went to London in April, 1770, hoping to make his way with his pen. He wrote for the newspapers opposed to the government and was paid poorly and irregularly. His fine poem, "An Excelente Balade of Charitie," was rejected by the *Town and Country Magazine* in July. He was too proud to accept help in either food or money, and since he saw nothing but starvation ahead, he swallowed arsenic on the night of August 24, 1770, and died.

EDITIONS

Poetical Works of Thomas Chatterton. With an Essay on the Rowley Poems by W. W. Skeat, and a Memoir by E. Bell. 2 vols. 1871.

Complete Poetical Works. Edited, with a Biographical Introduction, etc., by H. D. Roberts. 2 vols. 1906.

Poetical Works. With an Introduction by Sir S. Lee. 2 vols. 1906–9.

The Rowley Poems by Thomas Chatterton. Edited, with an Introduction, by M. E. Hare. 1911.

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Meyerstein, E. H. W.: "A Life of Thomas Chatterton." 1930.

Dixon, W. MacNeile: "Chatterton." The Warton Lecture on English Poetry. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. XVI. 1930.

The Bristowe Tragedie

Or, The Dethe of Syr Charles Bawdin

The featherd songster chaunticleer
Han wounde hys bugle horne,
And tolde the earlie villager
The commynge of the morne:

Kynge Edwarde sawe the ruddie streakes
Of lyghte eclypse the greie;
And herde the raven's crokynge throte
Proclayme the fated daie.

"Thou'rt ryghte," quod hee, "for, by the Godde
That syttes enthron'd on hyghe!
Charles Bawdin, and hys fellowes twaine,
To-daie shall surelie die."

Thenne wythe a jugge of nappy ale
Hys knyghtes dydd onne hymm waite;
"Goe tell the traytour, thatt to-daie
Hee leaves thys mortall state."

Sir Canterlone thenne bendedd lowe,
Wythe harte brymm-fulle of woe;
Hee journey'd to the castle-gate,
And to Syr Charles dydd goe.

Butt whenne hee came, hys children twaine,
And eke hys lovynge wyfe,
Wythe brinie tears dydd wett the floore,
For goode Syr Charleses lyfe.

"O goode Syr Charles!" sayd Canterlone,
"Badde tydyngs I doe brynge."
"Speke boldlie, manne," sayd brave Syr Charles,
"Whatte says thie traytor kynge?"

"I greeve to telle, before yonne sonne
Does fromme the welkinn flye,

Hee hath uppone hys honour sworne,
Thatt thou shalt surelie die."

"Wee all must die," quod brave Syr Charles;
"Of thatte I'm not affearde;
Whatte bootes to lyve a little space?
Thanke Jesu, I'm prepar'd:

"Butt telle thye kynge, for myne hee's not,
I'de sooner die to-daie
Thanne lyve hys slave, as manie are,
Tho' I shoulde lyve for aie."

Thenne Canterlone hee dydd goe out,
To telle the maior straite
To gett all thynges ynne reddyness
For goode Syr Charleses fate.

Thenne Maisterr Canynge saughte the kynge,
And felle down onne hys knee;
"I'm come," quod hee, "unto your grace
To move your clemencye."

Thenne quod the kynge, "Youre tale speke out,
You have been much oure friende;
Whatever youre request may bee,
Wee wylle to ytte attende."

"My nobile leige! alle my request
Ys for a nobile knyghte,
Who, tho' may hap hee has donne wronge,
Hee thoughte ytte stylle was ryghte:.

"Hee has a spouse and children twaine,
Alle rewyn'd are for aie;
Yff thatt you are resolv'd to lett
Charles Bawdin die to-daie."

"Speke nott of such a traytour vile,"
The kynge ynne furie sayde;

"Before the evening starre doth sheene,
Bawdin shall loose hys hedde:

"Justice does loudlie for hym calle,
And hee shalle have hys meede:
Speke, maister Canynge! Whatte thynge else
Att present doe you neede?"

"My nobile leige!" goode Canynge sayde,
"Leave justice to our Godde,
And laye the yronne rule asyde;
Be thyne the olyve rodde.

"Was Godde to serche our hertes and reines,
The best were synners grete;
Christ's vycarr only knowes ne synne,
Ynne alle thys mortall state.

"Lett mercie rule thyne infante reigne,
'Twylle faste thye crowne fulle sure;
From race to race thye familie
Alle sov'reigns shall endure:

"But yff wythe bloode and slaughter thou
Beginne thy infante reigne,
Thy crowne uponne thy childrennes brows
Wylle never long remayne."

"Canynge, awaie! thys traytour vile
Has scorn'd my power and mee;
Howe canst thou thenne for such a manne
Entreate my clemencye?"

"My nobile leige! the trulie brave
Wylle val'rous actions prize,
Respect a brave and nobile mynde,
Altho' ynne enemies."

"Canynge, awaie! By Godde ynne Heav'n
Thatt dydd mee beinge gyve,

I wylle nott taste a bitt of breade
Whilst thys Syr Charles dothe lyve.

"By Marie, and alle Seinctes ynne Heav'n,
Thys sunne shall be hys laste."
Thenne Canynge dropt a brinie teare,
And from the presence paste.

With herte brymm-fulle of gnawynge grief,
Hee to Syr Charles dydd goe,
And satt hymm downe uponne a stoole,
And teares beganne to flowe.

"Wee all must die," quod brave Syr Charles;
"Whatte bootes ytte howe or whenne;
Dethe ys the sure, the certaine fate
Of all wee mortall menne.

"Saye why, my friend, thie honest soul
Runns overr att thyne eye;
Is ytte for my most welcome doome
Thatt thou dost child-lyke crye?"

Quod godlie Canynge, "I doe weepe,
Thatt thou so soone must dye,
And leave thy sonnes and helpless wyfe;
'Tys thys thatt wettes myne eye."

"Thenne drie the tears thatt out thyne eye
From godlie fountaines sprynge;
Dethe I despise, and alle the power
Of Edwarde, traytour kynge.[1]

"Whan throgh the tyrant's welcom means
I shall resigne my lyfe,
The Godde I serve wylle soone provyde
For bothe mye sonnes and wyfe.

"Before I sawe the lyghtsome sunne,
Thys was appointed mee;

[1] Edward IV.

Shall mortall manne repyne or grudge
What Godde ordeynes to bee?

"Howe oft ynne battaile have I stoode,
Whan thousands dy'd arounde;
Whan smokynge streemes of crimson bloode
Imbrew'd the fatten'd grounde:

"Howe dydd I knowe thatt ev'ry darte,
That cutte the airie waie,
Myghte nott fynde passage toe my harte,
And close myne eyes for aie?

"And shall I nowe, forr feere of dethe,
Looke wanne and bee dysmayde?
Ne! fromm my herte flie childyshe feere,
Bee alle the manne display'd.

"Ah! goddelyke Henrie! Godde forefende,
And guarde thee and thye sonne,
Yff 'tis hys wylle; but yff 'tis nott,
Why thenne hys wylle bee donne.

"My honest friende, my faulte has beene
To serve Godde and mye prynce;
And thatt I no tyme-server am,
My dethe wylle soone convynce.

"Ynne Londonne citye was I borne,
Of parents of grete note;
My fadre dydd a nobile armes
Emblazon onne hys cote:

"I make ne doubte butt hee ys gone
Where soone I hope to goe;
Where wee for ever shall bee blest,
From oute the reech of woe:

"Hee taughte mee justice and the laws
Wyth pitie to unite;
And eke hee taughte mee howe to knowe
The wronge cause fromm the ryghte:

"Hee taughte mee wyth a prudent hande
To feede the hungrie poore,
Ne lett mye sarvants dryve awaie
The hungrie fromme my doore:

"And none can saye, butt alle mye lyfe
I have hys wordyes kept;
And summ'd the actyonns of the daie
Eche nyghte before I slept.

"I have a spouse, goe aske of her,
Yff I defyl'd her bedde?
I have a kynge, and none can laie
Blacke treason onne my hedde.

"Ynne Lent, and onne the holie eve,
Fromm fleshe I dydd refrayne;
Whie should I thenne appeare dismay'd
To leave thys worlde of payne?

"Ne! hapless Henrie[1]! I rejoyce,
I shall ne see thye dethe;
Moste willynglie ynne thye just cause
Doe I resign my brethe.

"Oh, fickle people! rewyn'd londe!
Thou wylt kenne peace ne moe;
Whyle Richard's sonnes exalt themselves,
Thye brookes wythe bloude wylle flowe.

"Saie, were ye tyr'd of godlie peace,
And godlie Henrie's reigne,
Thatt you dydd choppe[2] your easie daies
For those of bloude and peyne?

"Whatte tho' I onne a sledde be drawne,
And mangled by a hynde,
I doe defye the traytor's pow'r,
Hee can ne harm my mynde;

[1] Henry VI. [2] change.

"Whatte tho', uphoisted onne a pole,
Mye lymbes shall rotte ynne ayre,
And ne ryche monument of brasse
Charles Bawdin's name shall bear;

"Yett ynne the holie booke above,
Whyche tyme can't eate awaie,
There wythe the sarvants of the Lorde
Mye name shall lyve for aie.

"Thenne welcome dethe! for lyfe eterne
I leave thys mortall lyfe:
Farewell, vayne world, and alle that's deare,
Mye sonnes and lovynge wyfe!

"Nowe dethe as welcome to mee comes,
As e'er the moneth of Maie;
Nor woulde I even wyshe to lyve,
Wyth my dere wyfe to staie."

Quod Canynge, "'Tys a goodlie thynge
To bee prepar'd to die;
And from thys world of peyne and grefe
To Godde ynne heav'n to flie."

And nowe the belle beganne to tolle,
And claryonnes to sounde;
Syr Charles hee herde the horses feete
A prauncying onne the grounde:

And just before the officers,
His lovynge wyfe came ynne,
Weepynge unfeigned teeres of woe,
Wythe loude and dysmalle dynne.

"Sweet Florence! nowe I praie forbere,
Ynne quiet lett mee die;
Praie Godde, thatt ev'ry Christian soule
Maye looke onne dethe as I.

"Sweet Florence! why these brinie teeres?
Theye washe my soule awaie,

And almost make mee wyshe for lyfe,
Wyth thee, sweete dame, to staie.

"'Tys butt a journie I shalle goe
Untoe the lande of blysse;
Nowe, as a proofe of husbande's love,
Receive thys holie kysse."

Thenne Florence, fault'ring ynne her saie,
Tremblynge these wordyes spoke,
"Ah, cruele Edwarde! bloudie kynge!
Mye herte ys welle nyghe broke:

"Ah, sweete Syr Charles! why wylt thou goe,
Wythoute thye lovynge wyfe?
The cruelle axe thatt cuttes thye necke,
Ytte eke shall ende mye lyfe."

And nowe the officers came ynne
To brynge Syr Charles awaie,
Whoe turnedd toe hys lovynge wyfe,
And thus toe her dydd saie:

"I goe to lyfe, and nott to dethe;
Truste thou ynne Godde above,
And teache thye sonnes to feare the Lorde,
And ynne theyre hertes hym love:

"Teache them to runne the nobile race
Thatt I theyre fader runne;
Florence! shou'd dethe thee take—adieu!
Yee officers, leade onne."

Thenne Florence rav'd as anie madde,
And dydd her tresses tere;
"Oh! staie, mye husbande, lorde, and lyfe!"—
Syr Charles thenne dropt a teare.

'Tyll tyredd oute wythe ravynge loud,
Shee fellen onne the flore;
Syr Charles exerted alle hys myghte,
And march'd fromm oute the dore.

Uponne a sledde hee mounted thenne,
Wythe lookes fulle brave and swete;
Lookes thatt enshone ne moe concern
Thanne anie ynne the strete.

Before hym went the council-menne,
Ynne scarlett robes and golde,
And tassils spanglynge ynne the sunne,
Muche glorious to beholde:

The Freers of Seincte Augustyne next
Appeared to the syghte,
Alle cladd ynne homelie russett weedes,
Of godlie monkysh plyghte:[1]

Ynne diffraunt partes a godlie psaume
Moste sweetlie theye dydd chaunt;
Behynde theyre backes syx mynstrelles came,
Who tun'd the strunge bataunt.[2]

Thenne fyve-and-twentye archers came;
Echone the bowe dydd bende,
From rescue of Kynge Henries friends
Syr Charles forr to defend.

Bolde as a lyon came Syr Charles,
Drawne onne a clothe-layde sledde,
Bye two blacke stedes ynne trappynges white,
Wyth plumes uponne theyre hedde:

Behynde hym five-and-twenty moe
Of archers stronge and stoute,
Wyth bended bowe echone ynne hande,
Marched ynne goodlie route:

Seincte Jameses Freers marched next,
Echone hys parte dydd chaunt;

[1] condition; fashion.
[2] Misused as some sort of musical instrument; it literally means "hastening; eager."

Behynde theyre backes syx mynstrelles came,
Who tun'd the strunge bataunt:

Thenne came the maior and eldermenne,
Ynne clothe of scarlett deck't;
And theyre attendynge menne echone,[1]
Lyke Easterne princes trickt:

And after them, a multitude
Of citizenns dydd thronge;
The wyndowes were alle fulle of heddes,
As hee dydd passe alonge.

And whenne hee came to the hyghe crosse,
Syr Charles dydd turne and saie,
"O Thou, thatt savest manne fromme synne,
Washe mye soule clean thys daie!"

Att the grete mynsterr wyndowe sat
The kynge ynne myckle state,
To see Charles Bawdin goe alonge
To hys most welcom fate.

Soone as the sledde drewe nyghe enowe,
Thatt Edwarde hee myghte heare,
The brave Syr Charles hee dydd stande uppe,
And thus hys wordes declare:

"Thou seest me, Edwarde! traytour vile!
Expos'd to infamie;
Butt bee assur'd, disloyall manne!
I'm greater nowe thanne thee.

"Bye foule proceedyngs, murdre, bloude,
Thou wearest nowe a crowne;
And hast appoynted mee to dye,
By power nott thyne owne.

"Thou thynkest I shall dye to-daie;
I have beene dede 'till nowe,

[1] each one.

And soone shall lyve to weare a crowne
For aie uponne my browe:

"Whylst thou, perhapps, for som few yeares,
Shalt rule thys fickle lande,
To lett them knowe howe wyde the rule
'Twixt kynge and tyrant hande:

"Thye pow'r unjust, thou traytour slave!
Shall falle onne thye owne hedde"—
Fromm out of hearyng of the kynge
Departed thenne the sledde.

Kynge Edwarde's soule rush'd to hys face,
Hee turn'd hys hedde awaie,
And to hys broder Gloucester[1]
Hee thus dydd speke and saie:

"To hym that soe-much-dreaded dethe
Ne ghastlie terrors brynge,
Beholde the manne! hee spake the truthe,
Hee's greater thanne a kynge!"

"Soe let hym die!" Duke Richarde sayde;
"And maye echone oure foes
Bende downe theyre neckes to bloudie axe,
And feede the carryon crowes."

And nowe the horses gentlie drewe
Syr Charles uppe the hyghe hylle;
The axe dydd glysterr ynne the sunne,
His pretious bloude to spylle.

Syrr Charles dydd uppe the scaffold goe,
As uppe a gilded carre
Of victorye, bye val'rous chiefs
Gayn'd ynne the bloudie warre:

And to the people hee dydd saie,
"Beholde you see mee dye,

[1] The Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III.

For servynge loyally mye kynge,
 Mye kynge most ryghtfullie.

"As longe as Edwarde rules thys lande,
 Ne quiet you wylle knowe;
Youre sonnes and husbandes shalle bee slayne,
 And brookes wythe bloude shall flowe.

"You leave youre goode and lawfulle kynge,
 Whenne ynne adversitye;
Lyke mee, untoe the true cause stycke,
 And for the true cause dye."

Thenne hee, wyth preestes, uponne hys knees,
 A pray'r to Godde dydd make,
Beseechynge hym unto hymselfe
 Hys partynge soule to take.

Thenne, kneelynge downe, hee layd hys hedde
 Most seemlie onne the blocke;
Whyche fromme hys bodie fayre at once
 The able heddes-manne stroke:

And oute the bloude beganne to flowe,
 And rounde the scaffolde twyne;
And teares, enow to wash 't awaie,
 Dydd flowe fromme each mann's eyne.

The bloudie axe hys bodie fayre
 Ynnto foure partes cutte;
And ev'rye parte, and eke hys hedde,
 Uponne a pole was putte.

One parte dydd rotte onne Kynwulph-hylle,
 One onne the mynster-tower,
And one from off the castle-gate
 The crowen dydd devoure;

The other onne Seyncte Powle's goode gate,
 A dreery spectacle;

Hys hedde was plac'd onne the hyghe crosse,
Ynne hyghe-streete most nobile.

Thus was the ende of Bawdin's fate:
Godde prosper longe oure kynge,
And grante hee maye, wyth Bawdin's soule,
Ynne heav'n Godd's mercie synge!

(1772)

O, Synge untoe Mie Roundelaie

O! SYNGE untoe mie roundelaie,
O! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a reynynge[1] ryver bee;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Blacke hys cryne[2] as the wyntere nyghte,
Whyte hys rode[3] as the sommer snowe,
Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte;
Cale[4] he lyes ynne the grave belowe;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Swote[5] hys tyngue as the throstles note,
Quycke ynn daunce as thoughte canne bee.
Defte hys taboure, codgelle stote;[6]
O! hee lyes bie the wyllowe tree:
Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
Alle underre the wyllowe tree.

Harke! the ravenne flappes hys wynge,
In the briered delle belowe;
Harke! the dethe-owle loude dothe synge,
To the nyghte-mares as heie goe;

[1] running. [2] hair. [3] skin. [4] cold. [5] sweet. [6] cudgel stout.

Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

See! the whyte moone sheenes onne hie;
Whyterre ys mie true loves shroude;
Whyterre yanne the mornynge skie,
Whyterre yanne the evenynge cloude;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Heere, uponne mie true loves grave,
Schalle the baren fleurs be layde,
Nee one hallie Seyncte to save
Al the celness[1] of a mayde.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
Alle under the wyllowe tree.

Wythe mie hondes I'lle dente the brieres
Rounde his hallie corse to gre,[2]
Ouphante fairie,[3] lyghte youre fyres,
Heere mie boddie stylle schalle bee.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Comme, wythe acorne-coppe & thorne,
Drayne mie hartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and all yttes goode I scorne,
Daunce bie nete, or feaste by daie.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Waterre wytches, crownede wythe reytes,[4]
Bere mee to yer leathalle[5] tyde.
I die; I comme; mie true love waytes.
Thos the damselle spake, and dyed.

(1777)

[1] coolness. [2] grow. [3] elfin fairy. [4] sea weeds. [5] deadly.

An Excelente Balade of Charitie

As Wroten Bie The Gode Prieste Thomas Rowley, 1464

In Virgyne[1] the sweltrie sun gan sheene,
And hotte upon the mees[2] did caste his raie;
The apple rodded[3] from its palie greene,
And the mole[4] peare did bende the leafy spraie;
The peede chelandri[5] sunge the livelong daie;
'Twas nowe the pride, the manhode of the yeare,
And eke the grounde was dighte in its mose defte aumere.[6]

The sun was glemeing in the midde of daie,
Deadde still the aire, and eke the welken blue,
When from the sea arist in drear arraie
A hepe of cloudes of sable sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodlande drewe,
Hiltring attenes the sunnis fetive face,[7]
And the blacke tempeste swolne and gatherd up apace.

Beneathe an holme,[8] faste by a pathwaie side,
Which dide unto Seyncte Godwine's covent[9] lede,
A hapless pilgrim moneynge[10] dyd abide,
Pore in his viewe, ungentle in his weede,
Longe bretful of the miseries of neede,
Where from the hail-stone coulde the almer[11] flie?
He had no housen theere, ne anie covent nie.

Look in his glommed[12] face, his sprighte there scanne;
Howe woe-be-gone, how withered, forwynd,[13] deade!
Haste to thie church-glebe-house,[14] asshrewed[15] manne!
Haste to thie kiste,[16] thie onlie dortoure[17] bedde.

[1] The sun enters the part of the zodiac called the Virgin in August.
[2] meads; meadows. [3] reddened. [4] soft; moll (Latin: *mollis*).
[5] pied goldfinch. [6] arrayed in its neatest mantle.
[7] hiding at once the sun's festive face. [8] a kind of oak.
[9] It would have been *charitable* if the author had not pointed at personal characters in this "Ballad of Charity." The abbot of St. Godwin's at the time of writing of this was Ralph de Bellomont, a great stickler for the Lancastrian family. Rowley was a Yorkist.—*Chatterton.*
[10] moaning. [11] beggar; receiver of alms. [12] gloomy; glum.
[13] dry; withered. [14] the grave. [15] accursed. [16] chest.
[17] sleeping.

Cale,[1] as the claie whiche will gre on thie hedde
Is Charitie and Love aminge highe elves;
Knightis and Barons live for pleasure and themselves.

The gatherd storme is rype; the bigge drops falle;
The forswat[2] meadowes smethe,[3] and drenche the raine;
The comyng ghastness do the cattle pall,
And the full flockes are drivynge ore the plaine;
Dashde from the cloudes the waters flott[4] againe;
The welkin opes; the yellow levynne[5] flies;
And the hot fierie smothe[6] in the wide lowings[7] dies.

Liste! now the thunder's rattling clymmynge[8] sound
Cheves[9] slowie on, and then embollen[10] clangs,
Shakes the hie spyre, and, losst, dispended, drown'd,
Still on the gallard[11] eare of terroure hanges;
The windes are up; the lofty elmen swanges;[12]
Again the levynne and the thunder poures,
And the full cloudes are braste attenes in stonen showers.

Spurreynge his palfrie oere the watrie plaine,
The Abbote of Seyncte Godwynes convente came;
His chapournette[13] was drented with the reine,
And his pencte[14] gyrdle met with mickle shame;
He aynewarde tolde his bederoll[15] at the same;
The storme encreasen, and he drew aside,
With the mist[16] almes craver neere to the holme to bide.

His cope was all of Lyncolne clothe so fyne,
With a gold button fasten'd neere his chynne;
His autremete[17] was edged with golden twynne,
And his shoone pyke a loverds mighte have binne;[18]
Full well it shewn he thoughten coste no sinne:

[1] cold. [2] sunburnt. [3] smoke. [4] fly. [5] lightning.
[6] *steam; vapor.* [7] *flames.* [8] noisy. [9] moves.
[10] swelled; strengthened. [11] frightened. [12] swings.
[13] A small round hat, not unlike the shapournette in heraldry, formerly worn by ecclesiastics and lawyers.—*Chatterton.*
[14] painted
[15] He told his beads backwards; a figurative expression to signify cursing.—*Chatterton.*
[16] poor; needy. [17] A loose white robe worn by priests.—*Chatterton.*
[18] His peaked shoes might have been a lord's.

The trammels[1] of the palfrye pleasde his sighte,
For the horse-millanare[2] his head with roses dighte.

"An almes, sir prieste!" the droppynge pilgrim saide,
"O let me waite within your covente dore,
Till the sunne sheneth hie above our heade,
And the loude tempeste of the aire is oer;
Helpless and ould am I alas! and poor;
No house, ne friend, ne moneie in my pouche;
All yatte I calle my owne is this my silver crouche."[3]

"Varlet," replyd the Abbatte, "cease your dinne;
This is no season almes and prayers to give;
Mie porter never lets a faitour[4] in;
None touch mie rynge who not in honour live."
And now the sonne with the blacke cloudes did stryve,
And shettynge on the ground his glairie raie,
The Abbatte spurrde his steede, and eftsoones roadde awaie.

Once moe the skie was blacke, the thounder rolde;
Faste reyneynge[5] oer the plaine a prieste was seen;
Ne dighte full proude, ne buttoned up in golde;
His cope and jape[6] were graie, and eke were clene;
A Limitoure[7] he was of order seene;
And from the pathwaie side then turnèd hee,
Where the pore almer laie binethe the holmen tree.

"An almes, sir priest!" the droppynge pilgrim sayde,
"For sweete Seyncte Marie and your order sake!"
The Limitoure then loosen'd his pouche threade,
And did thereoute a groate of silver take;
The mister[8] pilgrim dyd for halline[9] shake.
"Here take this silver, it maie eathe[10] thie care;
We are Goddes stewards all, nete[11] of our owne we bare.

[1] A contrivance for teaching a horse to amble. [2] horse-milliner.
[3] a crucifix. [4] a vagabond. [5] running.
[6] A short surplus worn by friars of an inferior class and secular priests.—*Chatterton.*
[7] a friar licensed to beg within a limited region. [8] needy.
[9] joy. [10] ease. [11] naught.

"But ah, unhailie[1] pilgrim, lerne of me,
Scathe[2] anie give a rentrolle to their Lorde.
Here, take my semecope,[3] thou arte bare I see;
'Tis thyne; the Seynctes will give me mie rewarde."
He left the pilgrim, and his waie aborde.[4]
Virgynne and hallie Seyncte, who sitte yn gloure,[5]
Or give the mittie[6] will, or give the gode man power!

(1770)

[1] unhappy. [2] scarce. [3] a short undercloak. [4] went on.
[5] glory. [6] mighty.

Robert Fergusson

1750–1774

ROBERT FERGUSSON, the son of a haberdasher's clerk, was born in Edinburgh on September 5, 1750. He went to high school, at Edinburgh, and by securing a bursary he was given preparatory training at the Dundee grammar school and then, for four years, at St. Andrews University. He entered the university in 1765 with the intention of going into the ministry. In 1768 he left St. Andrews and gave up all thought of the church. He got a position as extracting clerk in the commissary clerk's office. In 1771 he became a regular contributor to Ruddiman's *Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement,* writing at first pastorals, then Scottish poems, so that his fame soon spread. He joined the Cape Club made up of prominent Edinburgh citizens, an exclusive debating society. In 1773 he published "Poems by R. Fergusson." The following year, he became ill and later insane. On October 16, he died.

EDITIONS

Works of Robert Fergusson, with Life, etc., by A. B. Grosart. 1851.
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BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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The Daft Days[1]

Now mirk December's dowie[2] face
Glowrs owr the rigs[3] wi' sour grimace,
While, through his minimum of space,
The bleer-ey'd sun,
Wi' blinkin' light, and stealing pace,
His race doth run.

[1] The Daft Days were Christmas, the last day of the year, New Year's Day, and the first Monday of the year. [2] dull. [3] ridges.

From naked groves nae birdie sings,
To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings,
The breeze nae od'rous flavour brings
Frae Borean cave;
And dwynin'[1] Nature droops her wings,
Wi' visage grave.

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean
Frae snawy hill or barren plain,
Whan Winter, 'midst his nipping train,
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift owr a' his bleak domain,
And guides the weir.[2]

Auld Reikie![3] thou 'rt the canty[4] hole,
A bield for mony a cauldrife soul,[5]
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth,[6]
While round they gar the bicker[7] roll,
To weet their mouth.

When merry Yule-day comes, I trow,
You'll scantlins find a hungry mou;
Sma' are our cares, our stamacks fou
O' gusty gear,
And kickshaws,[8] strangers to our view,
Sin' fairn-year.[9]

Ye browster[10] wives, now busk ye bra,[11]
And fling your sorrows far awa';
Then come and gie's the tither blaw[12]
O' reaming ale,
Mair precious than the Well of Spa,
Our hearts to heal.

Then, though at odds wi' a' the warl',
Amang oursells we'll never quarrel;
Though Discord gie a canker'd snarl

[1] fading; withering. [2] war. [3] Edinburgh, or Old Smoky.
[4] cheerful. [5] a shelter for many a dejected soul. [6] sociable.
[7] a wooden dish. [8] fancy dishes. [9] since last year. [10] brewer.
[11] dress yourselves finely. [12] the other blow

To spoil our glee,
As lang's there's pith into the barrel
We'll drink and 'gree.

Fiddlers, your pins in temper fix,
And roset weel your fiddle-sticks;
But banish vile Italian tricks
Frae out your quorum,
Nor *fortes* wi' *pianos* mix,
Gie's Tullochgorum.[1]

For naught can cheer the heart sae weel
As can a canty Highland reel,
It even vivifies the heel
To skip and dance:
Lifeless is he wha canna feel
Its influence.

Let mirth abound, let social cheer
Invest the dawning of the year;
Let blithesome innocence appear
To crown our joy,
Nor envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.

And thou, great god of *aqua vitæ!*
Wha sways the empire o' this city,
When fou we're sometimes capernoity,[2]—
Be thou prepar'd
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The City-Guard.

(1771)

Braid Claith

YE WHA are fain to hae your name
Wrote in the bonny book of Fame,
Let Merit nae pretension claim
To laurel'd wreath,

[1] See p. 735. [2] muddle-headed.

But hap ye weel, baith back and wame,[1]
In gude Braid Claith.

He that some ells o' this may fa',[2]
An' slae-black hat on pow[3] like snaw,
Bids bauld to bear the gree[4] awa',
Wi' a' this graith,[5]
Whan bienly[6] clad wi' shell fu' braw
O' gude Braid Claith.

Waesuck for him wha has na fek o' t![7]
For he 's a gowk[8] they're sure to geck[9] at,
A chiel that ne'er will be respekit
While he draws breath,
Till his four quarters are bedeckit
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

On Sabbath days the barber spark,
Whan he has done wi' scrapin' wark,
Wi' siller broachie in his sark
Gangs trigly,[10] faith!
Or to the Meadows, or the Park,
In gude Braid Claith.

Weel might ye trow, to see them there,
That they to shave your haffits[11] bare,
Or curl an' sleek a pickle[12] hair,
Wud be right laith,
Whan pacing wi' a gawsy[13] air
In gude Braid Claith.

If ony mettl'd stirrah green[14]
For favour frae a lady's een,
He mauna[15] care for bein' seen
Before he sheath

[1] both back and belly. [2] obtain. [3] head.
[4] prize. [5] dress. [6] comfortably.
[7] alas for him that has not plenty of it!
[8] gawk; fool. [9] jeer.
[10] goes trimly. [11] cheeks. [12] a small quantity.
[13] gaily dressed. [14] young fellow yearn.
[15] must not.

His body in a scabbard clean
O' gude Braid Claith.

For, gin he comes wi' coat thread-bare,
A feg for him she winna care,
But crook her bonny mou' fu' sair,
An' scald him baith:
Wooers shou'd ay their travel spare
Without Braid Claith.

Braid Claith lends fock an unco heese,[1]
Makes mony kail-worms butterflies,
Gies mony a doctor his degrees
For little skaith:[2]
In short, you may be what you please
Wi' gude Braid Claith.

For thof ye had as wise a snout on
As Shakespeare or Sir Isaac Newton,
Your judgment fouk wud hae a doubt on,
I'll tak' my aith,
Till they cou'd see ye wi' a suit on
O' gude Braid Claith.

(1772)

The Farmer's Ingle

Et multo in primis hilarans convivia Baccho,
Ante focum, si frigus erit, [si messis, in umbra,
Vina novum fundam calathis Ariusia nectar].[3]

VIRGIL. *Buc:* v., 69–71.

WHAN gloming grey out o'er the welkin keeks,[4]
Whan Batie ca's his owsen[5] to the byre,
Whan Thrasher John, sair dung,[6] his barn-door steeks,[7]

[1] gives folk a great lift. [2] for little trouble.
[3] For my chief care, making the feast merry with wine—in winter, before the hearth; in harvest-time, in the shade—I will pour from goblets the fresh nectar of Chian wine.—*Fairclough's translation.*
[4] peeps. [5] oxen. [6] worsted. [7] shuts.

And lusty lasses at the dighting[1] tire:
What bangs fu' leal[2] the e'enings coming cauld,
And gars snaw-tapit[3] winter freeze in vain:
Gars dowie[4] mortals look baith blyth and bauld,
Nor fley'd[5] wi' a' the poortith[6] o' the plain;
Begin my Muse, and chant in hamely strain.

Frae the big stack, weel winnow't on the hill,
Wi' divets theekit[7] frae the weet and drift,
Sods, peats, and heath'ry trufs[8] the chimley fill,
And gar their thick'ning smeek[9] salute the lift;[10]
The gudeman, new come hame, is blyth to find,
Whan he out o'er the halland[11] flings his een,
That ilka turn is handled to his mind,
That a' his housie looks sae cosh[12] and clean;
For cleanly house looes he, tho' e'er sae mean.

Weel kens the gudewife that the pleughs require
A heartsome meltith,[13] and refreshing synd[14]
O' nappy liquor, o'er a bleezing fire:
Sair wark and poortith douna weel be join'd.
Wi' butter'd bannocks[15] now the girdle[16] reeks,
I' the far nook the bowie[17] briskly reams;[18]
The readied kail[19] stand by the chimley cheeks,
And had the riggin[20] het wi' welcome steams,
Whilk than the daintiest kitchen nicer seems.

Frae this lat gentler gabs[21] a lesson lear;
Wad they to labouring lend an eidant[22] hand,
They'd rax[23] fell strang upo' the simplest fare,
Nor find their stamacks ever at a stand.
Fu' hale and healthy wad they pass the day,
At night in calmest slumbers dose fu' sound,
Nor doctor need their weary life to spae,[24]

[1] winnowing of the corn from the chaff. [2] defeats full well.
[3] snow-topped. [4] gloomy. [5] frightened. [6] poverty.
[7] thatched with turf cut into broad pieces. [8] turfs. [9] smoke.
[10] sky. [11] cottage. [12] comfortable. [13] meal. [14] drench.
[15] thick, round, flat cakes. [16] a circular iron plate for cooking
[17] dish. [18] overflows. [19] broth. [20] roof. [21] incessant talkers.
[22] diligent. [23] grow. [24] foretell.

Nor drogs their noddle and their sense confound,
Till death slip sleely on, and gi'e the hindmost wound.

On sicken food has mony a doughty deed
By Caledonia's ancestors been done;
By this did mony wight fu' weirlike[1] bleed
In brulzies[2] frae the dawn to set o' sun:
'Twas this that brac'd their gardies,[3] stiff and strang,
That bent the deidly yew in antient days,
Laid Denmark's daring sons on yird[4] alang,
Gar'd Scottish thristles bang the Roman bays;
For near our crest their heads they doughtna[5] raise.

The couthy cracks[6] begin whan supper's o'er,
The cheering bicker[7] gars them glibly gash
O' simmer's showery blinks[8] and winters sour,
Whase floods did erst their mailins[9] produce hash:[10]
'Bout kirk and market eke their tales gae on,
How Jock woo'd Jenny here to be his bride,
And there how Marion, for a bastard son,
Upo' the cutty-stool[11] was forced to ride,
The waefu' scald o' our Mess John[12] to bide.

The fient a chiep's[13] amang the bairnies now;
For a' their anger's wi' their hunger gane:
Ay maun the childer, wi' a fastin mou',
Grumble and greet, and make an unco mane,
In rangles[14] round before the ingle's low:[15]
Frae gudame's mouth auld warld tales they hear,
O' warlocks, louping round the wirrikow,[16]
O' gaists that win[17] in glen and kirk-yard drear,
Whilk touzles a' their tap,[18] and gars[19] them shak wi' fear.

For weel she trows that fiends and fairies be
Sent frae the de'il to fleetch[20] us to our ill;
That ky[21] hae tint[22] their milk wi' evil eie,

[1] warlike. [2] broils. [3] arms. [4] on earth. [5] durst not.
[6] pleasant chat. [7] bowl. [8] glimpses. [9] farms.
[10] make a mess of. [11] the low stool of repentance. [12] minister.
[13] not a murmur's. [14] rows. [15] flame. [16] scarecrow. [17] dwell.
[18] makes their hair stand on end. [19] makes. [20] flatter. [21] cows.
[22] lost.

And corn been scowder'd[1] on the glowing kill.
O mock na this, my friends! but rather mourn,
Ye in life's brawest spring wi' reason clear,
Wi' eild[2] our idle fancies a' return,
And dim our dolefu' days wi' bairnly fear;
The mind's ay cradled whan the grave is near.

Yet thrift, industrious, bides her latest days,
Tho' age her sair dow'd[3] front wi' runcles[4] wave,
Yet frae the russet lap the spindle plays,
Her e'enin stent[5] reels she as weel's the lave.
On some feast-day, the wee-things buskit braw[6]
Shall heeze[7] her heart up wi' a silent joy,
Fu' cadgie[8] that her head was up and saw
Her ain spun cleething on a darling oy,
Careless tho' death should make the feast her foy.[9]

In its auld lerroch[10] yet the deas[11] remains,
Whare the gudeman aft streeks[12] him at his ease,
A warm and canny lean for weary banes,
O' lab'rers doil'd[13] upo' the wintry leas.
Round him will badrins[14] and the colly[15] come,
To wag their tail, and cast a thankfu' eie
To him wha kindly flings them mony a crum
O' kebbock whang'd,[16] and dainty fadge[17] to prie;[18]
This a' the boon they crave, and a' the fee.

Frae him the lads their morning counsel tak,
What stacks he wants to thrash, what rigs to till,
How big a birn[19] maun lie on bassie's[20] back,
For meal and multure[21] to the thirling mill.
Niest the gudewife her hireling damsels bids
Glowr thro' the byre, and see the hawkies[22] bound,
Take tent case Crummy tak her wonted tids,[23]

[1] scorched. [2] with age. [3] withered. [4] wrinkles.
[5] allotted portion of work. [6] dressed finely. [7] lift. [8] cheerful.
[9] a farewell feast. [10] site. [11] a long wooden seat. [12] stretches.
[13] tired. [14] cats. [15] the shepherd dog.
[16] cheese cut in large lumps. [17] flat loaf of bread. [18] taste.
[19] burden. [20] an old horse. [21] toll of meal for the miller. [22] cows.
[23] take care lest Crummy (the cow) show her usual tricks.

And ca' the laiglen's[1] treasure on the ground,
Whilk spills a kebbuck nice, or yellow pound.

Then a' the house for sleep begin to grien,[2]
Their joints to slack fare industry a while;
The leaden god fa's heavy on their ein,
And hafflins steeks[3] them frae their daily toil;
The cruizy[4] too can only blink and bleer,
The restit ingle's done the maist it dow;[5]
Tacksman[6] and cottar eke to bed maun steer,
Upo' the cod[7] to clear their drumly pow,[8]
Till wauken'd by the dawning's ruddy glow.

Peace to the husbandman and a' his tribe,
Whase care fells a' our wants frae year to year;
Lang may his sock[9] and couter turn the gleyb,
And bauks[10] o' corn bend down wi' laded ear.
May Scotia's simmers ay look gay and green,
Her yellow har'sts frae scowry blasts decreed;
May a' her tenants sit fu' snug and bien,[11]
Frae the hard grip of ails and poortith freed,
And a lang lasting train o' peaceful hours succeed.

(1773)

[1] upset the milkpail's. [2] long for. [3] half shuts. [4] lamp.
[5] the fireplace has done the most it was prepared for.
[6] tenant-farmer. [7] pillow. [8] drowsy head. [9] plowshare.
[10] crossbeams. [11] prosperous.

John Skinner

1721–1807

JOHN SKINNER, the son of a parish schoolmaster, was born at Balfour, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on October 3, 1721. He won a bursary at Marischal College, Aberdeen. Later he taught school and became a Scottish Episcopalian. In 1742 he was appointed minister of Longside, Aberdeenshire, and in 1745–6 he suffered from the restrictions imposed upon Episcopalian ministers. He spent six months in prison in 1753 for preaching to an audience of more than four in his own house. In 1758 he tried to increase his meagre income by farming, but, like many others, failed. He rose above adversity long enough to compose his agricultural woes in a poem entitled "Letter to a Friend." He was more successful with his songs than with his farm. In 1787 he began a correspondence with Burns, who had met Skinner's second son, the Bishop of Aberdeen, and who secured through the son some of his father's best songs for Johnson's *Musical Museum*. In 1807 he retired to join his son the Bishop, and died just twelve days later, on June 16.

EDITION

Skinner's Songs and Poems. Edited by H. G. Reid. 1859.

Tullochgorum

COME gie's a sang! Montgomery cried,
And lay your disputes all aside;
What signifies 't for folk to chide
For what's been done before 'em?
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Let Whig and Tory all agree
To drop their Whig-mig-morum!
Let Whig and Tory all agree
To spend the night in mirth and glee,
And cheerfu' sing, alang wi' me,
The reel o' Tullochgorum!

O, Tullochgorum's my delight;
It gars us a' in ane unite;
And ony sumph'[1] that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him:
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
Blythe and cheery, blythe and cheery,
Blythe and cheery we'll be a',
And mak a happy quorum;
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance, till we be like to fa',
The reel o' Tullochgorum!

There needs na be sae great a phrase
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays;
I wadna gi'e our ain strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' 'em:
They're douff and dowie[2] at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie,
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum;
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Their *allegros* and a' the rest;
They canna please a Scottish taste,
Compared wi' Tullochgorum.

Let warldly minds themselves oppress
Wi' fears of want and double cess,[3]
And sullen sots themselves distress
Wi' keeping up decorum:
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit?
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Like auld Philosophorum?
Shall we so sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense nor mirth nor wit,
Nor ever rise to shake a fit
To the reel o' Tullochgorum?

May choicest blessings still attend
Each honest, open-hearted friend;

[1] silly person. [2] dull and gloomy. [3] assessment; tax.

And calm and quiet be his end,
And a' that's good watch o'er him!
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,
May peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' 'em!
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstained by any vicious spot,
And may he never want a groat
That's fond o' Tullochgorum!

But for the dirty, yawning fool
Who wants to be Oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him!
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
And nane say "wae's me" for him!
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Wi' a' the ills that come frae France,
Whae'er he be, that winna dance
The reel o' Tullochgorum!

(1776)

John Logan

1748–1788

JOHN LOGAN, the son of a farmer and a dissenter of the burgher branch of the secession, was born in 1748 at Soutra, Fala, Midlothian, Scotland. He attended the grammar school of Musselburgh and then entered Edinburgh University, where he became proficient in the classics and profited by the lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres of Hugh Blair. Here he completed his training for the ministry, and when he left he became tutor to the son of Mr. Sinclair of Ulbster, Caithness-shire. In 1770 he was licensed as a preacher, and in the same year brought out an edition of the poems of his friend and fellow student, Michael Bruce, including "some poems written by different authors." He was ordained in 1773 and given the parish of South Leith. Two years later he was appointed by the General Assembly as a member of a committee to revise and enlarge the paraphrases and hymns for public service, to which volume he added many of his own. During the two sessions of 1779–1781 he delivered historical lectures in Edinburgh, which he published as "Elements of the Philosophy of History." In 1781 he published a volume of odes including the "Ode to the Cuckoo," "The Braes of Yarrow," others from the Bruce volume, and his principal paraphrases. In 1783 his tragedy of "Runnimede" was performed in the Edinburgh Theatre. This was his undoing, for his parishioners objected to his theatrical interests and to the fact that he resorted somewhat excessively to stimulants to overcome his melancholy. So he resigned his charge, was given an annuity of £40, and moved to London, where he spent the rest of his life. He died on Christmas Day, 1788. His friends, Doctors Blair, Robertson, and Hardy brought out his sermons in two volumes in 1790–1.

EDITION

Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. XVIII. 1810.

The Braes of Yarrow

"THY braes were bonny, Yarrow stream!
When first on them I met my lover;
Thy braes how dreary, Yarrow stream!
When now thy waves his body cover!
For ever now, O Yarrow stream!
Thou art to me a stream of sorrow;
For never on thy banks shall I
Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow.

"He promised me a milk-white steed,
To bear me to his father's bowers;
He promised me a little page,
To 'squire me to his father's towers;
He promised me a wedding-ring,—
The wedding-day was fix'd to-morrow;—
Now he is wedded to his grave,
Alas, his watery grave in Yarrow!

"Sweet were his words when last we met;
My passion I as freely told him!
Clasp'd in his arms I little thought
That I should never more behold him!
Scarce was he gone, I saw his ghost;
It vanish'd with a shriek of sorrow;
Thrice did the water-wraith ascend,
And gave a doleful groan through Yarrow.

"His mother from the window look'd,
With all the longing of a mother;
His little sister weeping walk'd
The green-wood path to meet her brother:
They sought him east, they sought him west,
They sought him all the forest thorough;
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roar of Yarrow!

"No longer from thy window look,
Thou hast no son, thou tender mother!
No longer walk, thou lovely maid!

Alas, thou hast no more a brother!
No longer seek him east or west,
And search no more the forest thorough
For, wandering in the night so dark,
He fell a lifeless corse in Yarrow.

"The tear shall never leave my cheek,
No other youth shall be my marrow;[1]
I'll seek thy body in the stream,
And then with thee I'll sleep in Yarrow."
The tear did never leave her cheek,
No other youth became her marrow;
She found his body in the stream,
And now with him she sleeps in Yarrow.

(Publ. 1781)

[1] mate; lover.

William Cowper

1731–1800

WILLIAM COWPER, the son of the Reverend John Cowper, D.D., was born in the rectory of Great Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, on November 26, 1731. He could trace his descent through his mother to Henry III of England and could number among his ancestors the poet John Donne. His mother, to whom he wrote his memorable verses on the receipt of her picture when he was nearly sixty years old, died when he was only six. In 1741 he entered Westminster School, where he remained until he was eighteen. Then he was articled as an attorney's clerk, and as such misspent three good years of his life. He fell in love with his cousin Theodora Cowper, the daughter of Ashley Cowper, but his uncle would not give his consent to the marriage, and the nineteen love poems addressed to her failed of their immediate purpose. When he had finished his service in the office of Mr. Chapman, the attorney, he settled as a regular student of law in the Middle Temple, where he suffered from "such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of." In this year (1754) he was admitted to the bar, but it never became a source of income to him. When he was offered the clerkship of the journals of the House of Lords in 1763, he so dreaded the ordeal of the qualifying examination that his mind broke under the strain and he had to be placed in an asylum at St. Alban's on December 7. His mania was suicidal in character, and he believed that he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. However, under the expert care of Dr. Cotton, the proprietor of the "Collegium Insanorum," he recovered and wrote several hymns voicing his joy over the change.

In June, 1765, Cowper left the asylum and took up his abode at Huntingdon. Here he met William C. Unwin, the son of the Reverend Morley Unwin, who took him in as a lodger for forty guineas a year, beginning in November. When Mr. Unwin died, from a fall, his widow moved to Olney and took Cowper along with her. Here was the Reverend John Newton, a man of strong Calvinistic beliefs, who had been a sailor of idle and vicious habits, and then a successful slave-trader, before he had settled in Olney as a curate. The death of Cowper's brother in 1770 increased the melancholy that was settling upon him, and in 1772–73 he had more attacks of suicidal

mania. Newton tried to keep the poet busy, as the best way of fighting his malady, and together they composed hymns, which in 1779 were published as the "Olney Hymns." When Newton left Olney during that year, Cowper was thrown more on his own resources. Mrs. Unwin was, however, a constant help, and she suggested more poetic work. So in 1780 he began "The Progress of Error" as a moral satire, which was followed by "Truth," "Table-Talk," "Expostulation," "Hope," and "Charity," all published in 1781. In this year also he met Lady Austen, the widow of a baronet, in Olney, and they soon became fast friends. In 1783 she proposed the story of John Gilpin, and he turned it into a ballad; then she suggested a poem in blank verse, and he began "The Task," completing it in a year. Before it was finished, however, his relationship with Lady Austen came to an end, since there was too great an entanglement of love and jealousy and mere affection for this triangular relationship to endure. When "The Task" was published in 1785, it was at once successful. The year following, Cowper left Olney with Mrs. Unwin and settled in Weston Underwood, where in 1787 he had another mental attack. Later, his translation of Homer (1791) earned for him £1000 and the copyright. In 1796 Mrs. Unwin died, after five years of mental decay. Cowper died April 25, 1800.

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Table Talk

I PITY kings, whom worship waits upon
Obsequious from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatt'rer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses, and simp'ring peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;
If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
That wants no driving, and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
Should'ring and standing, as if struck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on;
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings. . . .

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such Herculean pow'rs,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,

Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,[1]
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of mis'ry far away;
He drinks his simple bev'rage with a gust;
And feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel the alacrity and joy,
With which he shouts and carols *Vive le Roy*,
Filled with as much true merriment and glee
As if he heard the king say—Slave be free.
Thus happiness depends, as nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that He has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout His works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage Slav'ry to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle. . . .

In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste, combin'd,
To polish, furnish, and delight, the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well-disciplin'd, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art;
And ev'ry warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot[2] and Swift,
With droll sobriety they rais'd a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmov'd the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again. . . .

[1] frolic.
[2] See p. 264.

Nature, exerting an unwearied pow'r,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to, ev'ry flow'r;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the fields, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads;
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes,
And charms the woodland scenes, and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own:
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy, that from the bow, that spans the sky,
Brings colours, dipt in heav'n, that never die;
A soul, exalted above earth, a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
And, as the sun in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close,
An eye like his to catch the distant goal:
Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On ev'ry scene and subject it surveys:
Thus grac'd, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

(1781)

Truth

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon am'rous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet-head[1] and mincing airs

[1] A head-dress provided with lappets. A lappet is a loose or overlapping part of a garment forming a flap or fold.—*N.E.D.*

Duly at clink of bell to morning pray'rs.
To thrift and parsimony much inclin'd,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanc'd to wear,
Which future pages are yet doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.
 She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and item, goes to church.
Conscious of age she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name;
Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper ev'ry day.
Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
Censorious, and her ev'ry word a wasp,
In faithful mem'ry she records the crimes,
Or real, or fictitious, of the times;
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
 Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified.
Take, madam, the reward of all your pray'rs,
Where hermits and where Brahmins meet with theirs;
Your portion is with them—nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down. . . .

 How readily upon the Gospel plan
That question has its answer—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in ev'ry sense a wretch;
An instrument, whose chords, upon the stretch,
And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear:
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's[1] interior shrine,

[1] Jerusalem.

Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;
But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told:
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scattered wide and nowhere to be found,
As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,
By native pow'r and energy her own,
As Nature at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wandering comet in his sphere,
Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human pow'r.
But what is man in his own proud esteem?
Hear him—himself the poet and the theme:
A monarch cloth'd with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a god! . . .

(1781)

The Task

BOOK I

And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne

The ruffling wind scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene. . . .

God made the country, and man made the town. 749
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts 750
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught,
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye, who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only can ye shine;
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon 760
The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendor of your lamps; they but eclipse 765
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours, 770
Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, stedfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

BOOK II

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd, 5
My soul is sick, with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,

It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax,
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own; and, having pow'r
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplor'd,
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart,
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave,
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too. . . .

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left,

Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too; and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all-essenc'd o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,[1]
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?[2]
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's[3] language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's[4] great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fall'n
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling Victory that moment won,

[1] The laurel was a symbol of victory; the myrtle was held sacred to Venus and was used as an emblem of love.—*N.E.D.*

[2] See I Chronicles, xiii, 9, 10.

[3] William Pitt, created Earl of Chatham and made Prime Minister under George III in 1766.

[4] General Wolfe, who died as he captured Quebec in 1760.

And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.
Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!—
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new. . . .

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!
In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,

As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!
Therefore, avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practis'd at the glass!
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves;
And having spoken wisely at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke
An eyebrow; next compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand, depending low:
The better hand, more busy gives the nose
Its bergamot,[1] or aids th' indebted eye
With op'ra-glass, to watch the moving scene,
And recognise the slow-retiring fair.—
Now this is fulsome; and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. A heav'nly mind
May be indiff'rent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.
He that negotiates between God and man,

[1] The oil of bergamot, a perfume. The bergamot is a citrus fruit.

As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and t' address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had tak'n in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain. . . .

BOOK III

I WAS a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had Himself
Been hurt by th' archers. In His side He bore,
And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wand'rers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,

And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discov'ries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known, and call the rant
A history: describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute and more industrious still,
Contrive creation; travel Nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both: and thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,

That, having wielded th' elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic, who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Pow'r who swears
That He will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reck'ning, that has liv'd in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in th' infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceiv'd. . . .

BOOK IV

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn;
And having dropp'd th' expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh th' important budget! usher'd in

With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
Not such his ev'ning, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd
And bor'd with elbow-points through both his sides,
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage;
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,
That tempts ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dext'rous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft

Meanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is asham'd and griev'd
T' engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise;
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katerfelto,[1] with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanc'd
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That lib'rates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And av'rice, that make man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,

[1] Katerfelto (d. 1799), a conjurer and quack.

By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates,[1] as the bee
From flow'r to flow'r, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in ev'ry clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return—a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
A pris'ner in the yet undawning east,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group
The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted ev'ning, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;

[1] A Latinism: "walks abroad."

No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath, that cannot fade, of flow'rs that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still;
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume clos'd, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them, an intruder on their joys,
Start at His awful name, or deem His praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with mem'ry's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,

The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found
Unlook'd for, life preserv'd and peace restor'd,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard.[1] O ev'nings, I reply,
More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,
As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsav'ry throng,
To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
The slope of faces, from the floor to the roof
(As if one master-spring controll'd them all)
Relax'd into an universal grin,
Sees not a count'nance there, that speaks of joy
Half so refin'd or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contriv'd
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove. . . .

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflexion multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme

[1] Horace: "Satires," II, vi, 65: *O noctes coenaeque deum!* "O evenings and feasts of the gods." Horace had a farm in the Sabine district.

Pregnant, or indispos'd alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess
Fearless a soul, that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amus'd have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films, that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
At ev'ning, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected pow'rs; and snapping short
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately wav'd
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His fav'rite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt th' horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce notic'd in the kindred dusk of eve.

To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy show'r: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil. . . .

The town has ting'd the country; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but alas,
Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now!
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
Th' unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
T' invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarm'd! Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polish'd arms be prim'd with care,
And drop the nightbolt;—ruffians are abroad;
And the first 'larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Ev'n daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Invet'rate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of pow'r begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;

Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they, that have an arm to check
The licence of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes, their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisteral sword in vain, and lays
His rev'rence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslav'd by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wildfowl or venison; and his errand speeds. . . .

BOOK V

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,

And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Prepost'rous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,[1]
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hung'ring man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out th' accustom'd load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher[2] and half cur,

[1] Grass of a reedy or rushlike habit.—*N.E.D.*
[2] A cross-bred dog, properly between the sheep dog or the collie, and the greyhound.—*N.E.D.*

His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow
With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighb'ring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the shelt'ring eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolv'd
T' escape th' impending famine, often scar'd
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut; and wading at their head
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought; th' imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close; and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long-protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,

As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labour more; and perch'd aloft
By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the trav'ller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
Lies undissolv'd; while silently beneath,
And unperceiv'd, the current steals away. . . .

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music, such as suits their sov'reign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart, that would not leap
To hear that ye were fall'n at last; to know
That ev'n our enemies, so oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he, who values liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immur'd though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And filleted about with hoops of brass
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,

Still to reflect, that though a joyless note
To him, whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball:
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements, as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting, and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In stagg'ring types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd
And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro
The studs, that thick emboss his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aslant
And then alternate; with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon th' endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps an heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation; makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean god,[1]
Ador'd through fear, strong only to destroy. . . .

[1] A manichee was an adherent of a religious system (third to fifth century A.D.) according to which Satan was regarded as coëternal with God.—*N.E.D.*

BOOK VI

I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though grac'd with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail,
That crawls at ev'ning in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileg'd; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs th' economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in His sov'reign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defil'd in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most dev'lish of them all.
Mercy to him, that shows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,

And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn. . . .

(1781–85)

Boadicea[1]

An Ode

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath a spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Ev'ry burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief:

"Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish,—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt,

"Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;

[1] Boadicea, the widow of the chief of the Iceni, had been publicly flogged by the Romans in 61 A.D. She called upon the whole Celtic population of the east and the south to revolt against the foreign tyrants. They did so, and, it was said, 70,000 Romans perished. Suetonius, the Roman governor, took vengeance and slew even more Britons. Boadicea committed suicide by taking poison.

Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
 Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
 From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
 Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
 Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
 None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
 Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
 Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died,
 Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
 Heav'n awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestow'd,
 Shame and ruin wait for you."

(1782)

On the Loss of the Royal George[1]

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED
TO THE MARCH IN "SCIPIO"

TOLL for the brave!
 The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
 Fast by their native shore!

[1] While the "Royal George" was being refitted at Spithead, off the southern coast of England, August 29, 1782, the shifting of her guns made her suddenly

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full charg'd with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;

heel over and sink; of the thousand sailors, marines, and visitors aboard, about eight hundred, including Admiral Kempenfelt, were drowned.—*Bronson.*

And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

(1782)

The Diverting History of John Gilpin

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton[1]
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,

[1] Edmonton is six miles from London.

And my good friend the calender[1]
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seiz'd fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it griev'd him sore,

[1] One who presses cloth by running it through rollers.

Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she lov'd,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;

That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
"'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,

How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle brac'd;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house"—
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tir'd";
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there;

For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amaz'd to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And lov'd a timely joke!
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:—

"I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,[1]
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

[1] in a merry humor.

He held them up, and in his turn
 Thus show'd his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
 They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
 That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
 Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
 And all the world would stare
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
 And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
 "I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
 You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
 For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
 Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
 Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
 As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first—
 For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
 Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
 She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
 That drove them to the Bell,

"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain!
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels!—
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scamp'ring in the rear,
They rais'd the hue and cry:—

"Stop thief! stop thief!— a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too!—
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;

And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

(1782)

On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture[1]

OH THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solac'd me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalise,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected, here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.
My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone

[1] Cowper's mother died in 1737, when he was six years old; this poem was written in 1790.

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens griev'd themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.
By expectation every day beguil'd,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capt,
'Tis now become a hist'ry little known,
That once we called the past'ral house our own.
Short-liv'd possession! but the record fair,
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effac'd
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and brakes
That humour[1] interpos'd too often makes;
All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
And still to be so, to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,

[1] whim, caprice.

Not scorn'd in heav'n, though little notic'd here.
Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours
When, playing with thy vesture's tissu'd flow'rs,
The violet, the pink, and jassamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"[1]
And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide[2]
Of life, long since, has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.
Yet O, the thought, that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth;[3]

[1] The quotation should be, "Where billows never break, nor tempests roar," from Garth's "Dispensary," III, 226.
[2] Cowper's father died in 1756.
[3] Mrs. Cowper, the poet's mother, could claim descent from Henry III, King of England.

But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell—time, unrevok'd, has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself remov'd, thy pow'r to soothe me left.

(1790)

To Mary[1]

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;—
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disus'd, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'd'st the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

[1] Mrs. Unwin, Cowper's friend for over thirty years.

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

And then I feel that still I hold
A richer store ten thousandfold
Than misers fancy in their gold,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two; yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

(1793)

To Mrs. Unwin

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from Heav'n as some have feign'd they drew,
An eloquence scarce giv'n to mortals, new,
And undebas'd by praise of meaner things,
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heav'nly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright:
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

(1793)

The Castaway[1]

OBSCUREST night involv'd the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.

[1] Suggested by a story in Lord George Anson's "Voyage round the World" (1748).

He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
 Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
 Or courage die away;
But wag'd with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
 To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd
 That, pîtiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
 And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent pow'r,
 His destiny repell'd;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in ev'ry blast,

Could catch the sound no more;
For then, by toil subdu'd, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date;
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

(1799)

George Crabbe

1754–1832

GEORGE CRABBE was born in very humble circumstances on December 24, 1754, at Aldborough, a small seaport in the county of Suffolk. In 1768 he was bound apprentice to a village doctor at Wickhambrook, near Bury St. Edmunds, as errand boy and farm laborer; and then in 1771 to a surgeon and apothecary at Woodbridge, which has been described as "one of the ugliest and dullest places in England." Crabbe was better off here than in Wickhambrook, even though his job was mostly that of putting up prescriptions. He had been trying his hand at verses, and published some in Wheble's *Lady's Magazine* in 1772. Just before leaving Woodbridge, he published in 1774 a poem of some seven hundred lines called "Inebriety." Then he returned to Aldborough, where he was employed by the parish to care for the poor, and was paid, it might be said, in kind. Faced by poverty and no better prospects, he resolved to stake his future on London. So with three borrowed pounds, a box of surgical instruments, and some pieces of poetry (including the first draft of "The Library") he set out for the great city in 1780. Here he had printed for him, on what terms we do not know, "The Candidate, a Poetical Epistle to the Authors of *The Monthly Review*," which obtained a caustic notice. In the next year, however, Burke, when appealed to, read "The Library" and persuaded Dodsley to publish it. He did so, and the poem was an immediate success. Through Burke he met Reynolds and Johnson, and obtained some financial relief. Toward the end of 1781 he was ordained deacon and made curate to the rector of Aldborough. In the following year he was appointed chaplain to the Duke of Rutland and went to live at Belvoir Castle. In 1783 "The Village" was published and was at once successful. It was followed by the less happy "The Newspaper," in 1785. For about twenty years from this date Crabbe was engaged in several livings, going about his humble tasks as a country parson; what writing he did during this time, e.g., three ms. novels, he "incremated." In 1806 he finished "The Parish Register," and he published it the next year. Then followed "The Borough" (1810), "Tales in Verse" (1812), and "Tales of the Hall" (1819). For the last, Murray the publisher gave him

£3000! On February 3, 1832, he died, after covering the full period of the romantic movement, though he was not of it.

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The Village

BOOK I

THE village life, and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasants and declining swains;
What labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last;
What form the real picture of the poor,
Demand a song—the Muse can give no more.
 Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:

No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they never feel.
 On Mincio's banks in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?
 Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasants' pipes; but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few, amid the rural-tribe, have time
To number syllables, and play with rhyme;
Save honest Duck,[1] what son of verse could share
The poet's rapture, and the peasant's care?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade?
 From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask;
To sing of shepherds is an easy task:
The happy youth assumes the common strain,
A nymph his mistress, and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.
 I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;
While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts—
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?

[1] Stephen Duck, the poetical thresher.

No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates,
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as bards will not:
Nor you, ye poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies, nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss[1] paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock[2] throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.
So looks the nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betray'd by man, then left for man to scorn;
Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.
Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face;

[1] A plant meaning literally "ox-tongue" (Greek), from the shape and roughness of its leaf.
[2] a plant also called field mustard.

Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.
 Here too the lawless merchant of the main[1]
Draws from his plough th' intoxicated swain;
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.
 Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engaged some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks return'd the sound?
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste.
Or, when detected in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.
 Here, wand'ring long amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields:
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race,
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,[2]
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to their coast directs its vent'rous way;
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.
 As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land,
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,

[1] the smuggler.
[2] The bribe given in the septennial elections to Parliament.

Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door;
And begs a poor protection from the poor!
 But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land;
Hers is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;
But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
Where Plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore,—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.
 Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.
 Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide;
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet, urged along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field:
Till long-contending nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.
 Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,

Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share!
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.
 Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand!
 Nor yet can Time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease;
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except his own engage;
Who, propp'd on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.
 He once was chief in all the rustic trade;
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs:
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay, the poor disdain:
Alternate masters now their slave command,
Urge the weak efforts of his feeble hand,
And, when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts, of lazy poor complain.
 Oft may you see him, when he tends the sheep,
His winter-charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow,
When, roused by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn:—
 "Why do I live, when I desire to be
At once from life and life's long labour free?

Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
Nipp'd by the frost, and shivering in the wind;
There it abides till younger buds come on,
As I, now all my fellow-swains are gone;
Then, from the rising generation thrust,
It falls, like me, unnoticed to the dust.
"These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see,
Are others' gain, but killing cares to me;
To me the children of my youth are lords,
Cool in their looks, but hasty in their words:
Wants of their own demand their care; and who
Feels his own want and succours others too?
A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
None need my help, and none relieve my woe;
Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
And men forget the wretch they would not aid."
Thus groan the old, till, by disease oppress'd,
They taste a final woe, and then they rest.
Theirs is yon house that holds the parish-poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel[1] hums doleful through the day;—
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there!
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed,
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay.
Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mix'd with the clamors of the crowd below;
Here, sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride;

[1] the spinning wheel.

But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.
Say ye, oppress'd by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye, to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?
Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between,
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock,[1] with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope till sickness wears a smile.
But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go,
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye:
A potent quack, long versed in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy Bench[2] protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.
Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;

[1] a bed filled with flocks or tufts of wool. [2] judges on the bench.

In haste he seeks the bed where Misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door:
His drooping patient, long inured to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man; and silent sinks into the grave.

But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears, which "bold bad" men despise;
Fain would he ask the parish-priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above:
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls:
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a year"?[1]
Ah! no; a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock:
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play:
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel?

Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now; the bitter hour is o'er,
The man of many sorrows sighs no more.
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below;
There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee:
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer claims his humble bow,

[1] Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," l. 142.

Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!
 Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend:
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch ruled their little court.
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand,
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relics of the parish poor.
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;
And, waiting long, the crowd retire distress'd,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unbless'd.

(1780–83)

The Borough

LETTER I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

"DESCRIBE the Borough"—though our idle tribe
May love description, can we so describe,
That you shall fairly streets and buildings trace,
And all that gives distinction to a place?
This cannot be; yet, moved by your request,
A part I paint—let fancy form the rest.
 Cities and towns, the various haunts of men,
Require the pencil; they defy the pen:
Could he, who sang so well the Grecian fleet,[1]
So well have sung of alley, lane, or street?
Can measured lines these various buildings show,
The Town-Hall Turning, or the Prospect Row?
Can I the seats of wealth and want explore,
And lengthen out my lays from door to door?

[1] Homer; in the "Iliad," II.

Then let thy fancy aid me.—I repair
From this tall mansion of our last-year's mayor,
Till we the outskirts of the Borough reach,
And these half-buried buildings next the beach,
Where hang at open doors the net and cork,
While squalid sea-dames mend the meshy work,
Till comes the hour, when fishing through the tide,
The weary husband throws his freight aside;
A living mass, which now demands the wife,
Th' alternate labours of their humble life.
Can scenes like these withdraw thee from thy wood,
Thy upland forest or thy valley's flood?
Seek then thy garden's shrubby bound, and look,
As it steals by, upon the bordering brook;
That winding streamlet, limpid, lingering, slow,
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow;
Where in the midst, upon her throne of green,
Sits the large lily as the water's queen;
And makes the current, forced awhile to stay,
Murmur and bubble as it shoots away;
Draw then the strongest contrast to that stream,
And our broad river will before thee seem.
With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide,
Flowing, it fills the channel vast and wide;
Then back to sea, with strong majestic sweep
It rolls, in ebb yet terrible and deep;
Here sampire-banks and salt-wort[1] bound the flood;
There stakes and sea-weeds withering on the mud;
And higher up, a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place.
Thy gentle river boasts its pigmy boat,
Urged on by pains, half grounded, half afloat,
While at her stern an angler takes his stand,
And marks the fish he purposes to land;
From that clear space, where, in the cheerful ray
Of the warm sun, the scaly people play.
Far other craft our prouder river shows,
Hoys, pinks, and sloops; brigs, brigantines, and snows:[2]
Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
But one poor dredger where his oysters lie:

[1] a kind of maritime plant. [2] small coasting vessels.

He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin,
To aid the warmth that languishes within;
Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
His tingling fingers into gathering heat.

He shall again be seen when evening comes,
And social parties crowd their favourite rooms:
Where on the table pipes and papers lie,
The steaming bowl or foaming tankard by;
'Tis then, with all these comforts spread around,
They hear the painful dredger's welcome sound;
And few themselves the savoury boon deny,
The fool that feeds, the living luxury.

Yon is our quay! those smaller hoys from town,
Its various wares, for country-use, bring down;
Those laden wagons, in return, impart
The country-produce to the city mart;
Hark! to the clamour in that miry road.
Bounded and narrow'd by yon vessel's load,
The lumbering wealth she empties round the place,
Package and parcel, hogshead, chest, and case.
While the loud seaman and the angry hind,
Mingling in business, bellow to the wind.

Near these a crew amphibious, in the docks,
Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:
See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide;
See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side;
Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,
And planks which curve and crackle in the smoke.
Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far
Bear the warm pungence of o'er-boiling tar.

Dabbling on shore half-naked sea-boys crowd,
Swim round a ship, or swing upon the shroud;
Or in a boat purloin'd, with paddles play,
And grow familiar with the watery way:
Young though they be, they feel whose sons they are,
They know what British seamen do and dare;
Proud of that fame, they raise and they enjoy
The rustic wonder of the village-boy.

Before you bid these busy scenes adieu,

Behold the wealth that lies in public view,
Those far-extended heaps of coal and coke,
Where fresh-fill'd lime-kilns breathe their stifling smoke.
This shall pass off, and you behold, instead,
The night-fire gleaming on its chalky bed;
When from the light-house brighter beams will rise,
To show the shipman where the shallow lies.
 Thy walks are ever pleasant; every scene
Is rich in beauty, lively, or serene:
Rich—is that varied view with woods around,
Seen from thy seat, within the shrubb'ry bound;
Where shines the distant lake, and where appear
From ruins bolting, unmolested deer;
Lively—the village-green, the inn, the place,
Where the good widow schools her infant race,
Shops, whence are heard the hammer and the saw,
And village-pleasures unreproved by law;
Then how serene! when in your favourite room,
Gales from your jasmines soothe the evening gloom;
When from your upland paddock[1] you look down,
And just perceive the smoke which hides the town;
When weary peasants at the close of day
Walk to their cots, and part upon the way;
When cattle slowly cross the shallow brook,
And shepherds pen their folds, and rest upon their crook.
 We prune our hedges, prime our slender trees,
And nothing looks untutor'd and at ease;
On the wide heath, or in the flow'ry vale,
We scent the vapors of the sea-born gale;
Broad-beaten paths lead on from stile to stile,
And sewers from streets, the road-side banks defile;
Our guarded fields a sense of danger show
Where garden-crops with corn and clover grow;
Fences are form'd of wreck and placed around,
(With tenters[2] tipp'd) a strong repulsive bound;
Wide and deep ditches by the gardens run,
And there in ambush lie the trap and gun;
Or yon broad board, which guards each tempting prize,
"Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies."[3]

[1] a small pasture or field. [2] sharp hooked nails.
[3] From Pope's "Moral Essays," III, 340.

There stands a cottage with an open door,
Its garden undefended blooms before:
Her wheel is still, and overturn'd her stool,
While the lone widow seeks the neighb'ring pool:
This gives us hope, all views of town to shun—
No! here are tokens of the sailor-son;
That old blue jacket, and that shirt of check,
And silken kerchief for the seaman's neck;
Sea-spoils and shells from many a distant shore,
And furry robe from frozen Labrador.
Our busy streets and sylvan-walks between,
Fen, marshes, bog, and heath all intervene;
Here pits of crag, with spongy, plashy base,
To some enrich th' uncultivated space:
For there are blossoms rare, and curious rush,
The gale's[1] rich balm, and sun-dew's[2] crimson blush,
Whose velvet leaf with radiant beauty dress'd,
Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.
Not distant far, a house commodious made,
(Lonely yet public stands) for Sunday-trade;
Thither, for this day free, gay parties go,
Their tea-house walk, their tippling rendezvous;
There humble couples sit in corner-bowers,
Or gaily ramble for th' allotted hours;
Sailors and lasses from the town attend,
The servant-lover, the apprentice-friend;
With all the idle social tribes who seek
And find their humble pleasures once a week.
Turn to the watery world!—but who to thee
(A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint—the sea?
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms,
Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run;
Embrown'd and horrid[3] now, and now serene,
In limpid blue, and evanescent green;
And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,

[1] the bog myrtle.
[2] a bog plant whose leaves are covered with a sticky fluid that shine in the sun like dew.
[3] rough (as in the Latin *horridus*).

Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye.
 Be it the summer-noon: a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends)—
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide;
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more?
 Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awaken'd giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.
 View now the winter-storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud;
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.
 All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course.
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past

Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.
 Far off the petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
 High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight go forth.
 In-shore their passage tribes of seagulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.
 Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, ""Tis a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more tonight!"
 Hark! to those sounds! they're from distress at sea:
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, 'tis a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern;
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall;
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet,
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or entreat.
 See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,

Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers, "No!
I will not"—still she cries, "Thou shalt not go."
No need of this; not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float;
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.
From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;
But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory dress'd!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.
But hear we now those sounds? Do lights appear?
I see them not! the storm alone I hear:
And lo! the sailors homeward take their way;
Man must endure—let us submit and pray.
Such are our winter-views; but night comes on—
Now business sleeps, and daily cares are gone;
Now parties form, and some their friends assist
To waste the idle hours at sober whist;
The tavern's pleasure or the concert's charm
Unnumber'd moments of their sting disarm;
Play-bills and open doors a crowd invite,
To pass off one dread portion of the night;
And show and song and luxury combined,
Lift off from man this burthen of mankind.
Others advent'rous walk abroad and meet
Returning parties pacing through the street;
When various voices, in the dying day,
Hum in our walks, and greet us in our way;
When tavern-lights flit on from room to room,
And guide the tippling sailor staggering home:
There as we pass, the jingling bells betray
How business rises with the closing day:
Now walking silent, by the river's side,
The ear perceives the rippling of the tide;
Or measured cadence of the lads who tow
Some enter'd hoy, to fix her in her row;
Or hollow sound, which from the parish-bell
To some departed spirit bids farewell!

Thus shall you something of our Borough know,
Far as a verse, with Fancy's aid, can show;
Of sea or river, of a quay or street,
The best description must be incomplete;
But when a happier theme succeeds, and when
Men are our subjects and the deeds of men;
Then may we find the Muse in happier style,
And we may sometimes sigh and sometimes smile.

(1810)

William J. Mickle

1735–1788

WILLIAM J. MICKLE, the son of a parish minister of Langholm, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, was born on September 28, 1735, and was educated at the Langholm grammar school and at the high school in Edinburgh. In 1749 he became clerk in an Edinburgh brewery purchased by his father, and when his father died in 1757, the ownership passed over to the son. But Mickle was more interested in poetry than in beer, and while he was contributing poems anonymously to Donaldson's "Collection of Poetry," the business was running down. Finally he gave it up and went to London, where he settled as a man of letters. In 1765 he became a corrector for the Clarendon Press, Oxford. In 1767 he published his longest original poem, "The Concubine," and three years later his "Voltaire in the Shades," an attack on the deists. In the following year (1771) he wrote a play, "The Siege of Marseilles," which neither Garrick nor Harris would produce and the manuscript of which Sheridan never returned. From 1771 to 1775, having given up his position with the Clarendon Press, he was busy translating the "Lusiad" of de Camoëns, and published it with critical matter in 1775. In 1779 he was made secretary to Commodore George Johnstone and sailed with him to Portugal, where he became a member of the Royal Society of Portugal. In 1781 he returned to England and lived comfortably on his share of the prizes gained by the squadron. He contributed "Cumnor Hall" to Evans's "Old Ballads." He died at Forest Hill on October 28, 1788. A quarto edition of his poems came out in 1794, and a corrected and enlarged edition in 1807.

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Chalmers: "English Poets," Vol. XVII. 1810.
Chiswick Press Poets. Vol. LXVI. 1822.

There's Nae Luck about the House

And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to think of wark?
Ye jauds,[1] fling by your wheel.
Is this the time to think of wark,
When Colin's at the door?
Gi'e me my cloak! I'll to the quay
And see him come ashore.

For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck ava;[2]
There's little pleasure in the house,
When our gudeman's awa'.

Rise up and mak' a clean fireside;
Put on the muckle pot;
Gi'e little Kate her cotton gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat:
And mak' their shoon as black as slaes,[3]
Their hose as white as snaw;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been long awa'.

There's twa fat hens upon the bauk,[4]
Been fed this month and mair;
Mak' haste and thraw[5] their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare;
And mak' the table neat and clean,
Gar[6] ilka thing look braw;
It's a' for love of my gudeman,
For he's been long awa'.

O gi'e me down my bigonet,[7]
My bishop satin gown,
For I maun tell the bailie's wife
That Colin's come to town.
My Sunday's shoon they maun[8] gae on,

[1] jades. [2] at all. [3] sloes. [4] crossbeam. [5] twist. [6] make.
[7] bonnet. [8] must.

My hose o' pearl blue;
'Tis a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's baith leal and true.

Sae true his words, sae smooth his speech,
His breath's like caller[1] air!
His very foot has music in't,
As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy with the thought,—
In troth, I'm like to greet.[2]

The cauld blasts o' the winter wind,
That thrilled through my heart,
They're a' blawn by; I ha'e him safe,
Till death we'll never part:
But what puts parting in my head?
It may be far awa';
The present moment is our ain,
The neist[3] we never saw.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,
I ha'e nae more to crave;
Could I but live to mak' him blest,
I'm blest above the lave:[4]
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,—
In troth, I'm like to greet.

(c. 1771)

[1] fresh. [2] weep. [3] next. [4] rest.

John Mayne

1759–1836

JOHN MAYNE was born at Dumfries, Scotland, on March 26, 1759. He was educated at the local grammar school and then became a printer in the office of *The Dumfries Journal.* In 1782 he accompanied his family to Glasgow, where he worked in the Foulis publishing house. Then he settled in London, first as a printer, and later as the proprietor and the joint editor of *The Star*, an evening paper. He was thus able to print some of his poems, of which "Logan Braes" was one. After 1777 he occasionally contributed poems to Ruddiman's *Weekly Magazine*, Edinburgh, and from 1807 to 1817 he had some lyrics accepted by the *Gentleman's Magazine.* His "Siller Gun" appeared in twelve stanzas in 1777; it was enlarged to two cantos in 1779, to three in 1780, to four in 1808, and to five, with notes, in its final form in 1836. That year Mayne died on March 14, in London.

Logan Braes

BY LOGAN'S streams that rin sae deep
Fu' aft, wi' glee, I've herded sheep,
I've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes,
Wi' my dear lad, on Logan braes.
But wae's my heart! thae days are gane,
And fu' o' grief I herd alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

Nae mair, at Logan kirk, will he,
Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or when it's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.
I weel may sing thae days are gane—
Frae kirk and fair I come alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes!

At e'en when hope amaist is gane,
I dander dowie and forlane,
Or sit beneath the trysting-tree,
Where first he spak of love to me.
O! cou'd I see thae days again,
My lover skaithless, and my ain;
Rever'd by friends, and far frae faes,
We'd live in bliss on Logan braes.

(1789)

Robert Burns

1759–1796

ROBERT BURNS, the son of a farmer in the parish of Alloway, was born on January 25, 1759. He received his first ideas of English literature from a young man, John Murdoch, who was employed by the elder Burns and four of his neighbors to teach the school at Alloway. After two years and a half of this schooling, when the family moved to Mount Oliphant farm, he fell largely under the personal instruction of his father, who was a wise and intelligent teacher. But the work on the farm was killing; it almost broke the father, and it left its mark on the son. In 1777 they moved to Lochlie, a farm of one hundred and thirty acres, in Tarbolton parish, where they lived more comfortably. But lawsuits and disease put an end to William Burns in February, 1784. "His all," his son records, "went among the rapacious hell-hounds that growl in the Kennel of Justice." The two brothers, Robert and Gilbert, were able to secure the Mossgiel farm in Mauchline parish. But neither of them was a successful farmer, and luck, as usual in such a case, was against them. In the meantime, however, Robert Burns was experiencing life and love, and he was turning both into poetry. In 1784 Elizabeth Paton bore him a daughter, "the First Instance," he wrote, "that entitled him to the Venerable Appellation of Father." And then there were Jean Armour, whom he was later to marry but not yet—though the reason existed—and Mary Campbell, and others, whom to detail it here perhaps profiteth not. His first volume of poems was published at Kilmarnock in July, 1786, as "Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," for which he got £20. His publisher refused to bring out a second edition unless he got the price of the paper in advance, and Burns had not the necessary £27. So he set off for Edinburgh with high hopes and low resources, except those of his teeming brain, and reached the capital on November 28, 1786. Here he was received and lionized by the very best people. The first Edinburgh edition of his poems came out on April 21, 1787, in an issue of 2800 copies, of which 1500 were subscribed in advance. The amount he received is not certainly known, but it seems to have been in the neighborhood of £500.

In June Burns was back in Mauchline, quite an important personage now. By the end of the year there was the romantic episode of

Mrs. McLehose, who was Clarinda to his Sylvander. Jean Armour's state, however, grew worse, and Burns at last, on April 7, 1788, made her technically an honest woman. Meantime he took the Ellisland farm in Dumfriesshire, which in July, 1789, he turned over to Jean and her sisters to be run as a dairy farm, while he attended to his recently assumed duties in the excise. In the intervals of his rather strenuous duties, which involved riding as many as two hundred miles a week, he was composing poems. The farm, however, did not prosper, and there was nothing to do but give it up. So Burns moved his whole family to the town of Dumfries (1791), where he had to settle in very confining quarters. During these years he contributed to James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* and George Thomson's *Select Scottish Melodies*. A new Edinburgh edition of his poems came out in two volumes in 1793; it was followed by another the year after, which was the last to appear in his lifetime. His years at Dumfries were marked by the composition of over one hundred and fifty songs and by other activities of a literary character, which, with the testimony of reliable witnesses, give the lie to many of the yarns about his drinking himself to death. His life came to an end as the result of a disease that had declared itself as early as his thirteenth year and that is now recognized as endocarditis. The pity is that when his death occurred, on July 21, 1796, he was only thirty-eight years old.

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A Prayer in the Prospect of Death

O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause
 Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
 Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
 Of life I ought to shun—
As something, loudly, in my breast,
 Remonstrates I have done—

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
 With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
 Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
 Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good—for such Thou art—
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

(1781)

Mary Morison

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide[1] the stoure,[2]
A weary slave frae[3] sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen,[4] when to the trembling string
The dance gaed[5] thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,[6]
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut[7] is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,[8]
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

(1781)

[1] abide. [2] the strife. [3] from. [4] last night. [5] went.
[6] fine; handsome. [7] fault. [8] not give.

My Nanie, O

BEHIND yon hills, where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nanie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill;[1]
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true;
As spotless as she's bonie, O;
The op'ning gowan,[2] wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome ay to Nanie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,[3]
An' I maun[4] guide it cannie,[5] O;
But warl's gear[6] ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a'—my Nanie, O.

Our auld guidman[7] delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds[8] his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by;[9]
I'll tak what Heav'n will send me, O;

[1] shrill. [2] daisy. [3] wages. [4] must. [5] carefully.
[6] world's goods. [7] master. [8] holds. [9] I care not at all.

Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

(1782)

Poor Mailie's Elegy

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears tricklin down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead![1]
The last, sad cape-stane[2] of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie,[3] wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend an' neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him:
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wat[4] she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense:[5]
I'll say 't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely,[6] keeps the spence[7]
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,[8]
Her living image in her yowe[9]
Comes bleatin till him, owre the knowe,[10]
For bits o' bread;

[1] remedy. [2] copestone. [3] gloomy. [4] know. [5] discretion.
[6] lonely. [7] the inner room. [8] the glen. [9] ewe. [10] knoll.

An' down the briny pearls rowe[1]
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get[2] o' moorlan tips,[3]
Wi' tawted ket,[4] an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae 'yont the Tweed:
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips[5]
Than Mailie's—dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie[6] thing—a rape![7]
It maks guid fellows girn[8] an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters[9] tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon[10]
His Mailie's dead!

(1782)

Green Grow the Rashes,[11] *O*

CHORUS

GREEN grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere nae for the lasses, O?

[1] roll. [2] no issue. [3] rams. [4] matted fleece. [5] shears.
[6] unlucky. [7] a rope. [8] grin. [9] bagpipes. [10] above.
[11] rushes.

The war'ly[1] race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a cannie[2] hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O:
An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie,[3] O.

For you sae douce,[4] ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

(1783)

To Davie: A Brother Poet

SECOND EPISTLE

AULD NEEBOR,
I'M THREE times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant[5] frien'ly letter:
Tho' I maun say 't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair;
For my puir, silly, rhymin clatter
Some less maun sair.[6]

[1] worldly. [2] quiet. [3] topsy-turvy. [4] so sedate.
[5] old-favoring; sagacious. [6] serve.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle,
Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,[1]
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle[2]
O' war'ly cares;
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld gray hairs!

But Davie, lad, I'm red ye 're glaikit;[3]
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
Until ye fyke;[4]
Sic han's as you sud ne'er be faiket,[5]
Be hain't wha like.[6]

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin the words to gar them clink;[7]
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or Masons;
An' whyles, but ay owre late I think,
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin clink—
The devil-haet, that I sud ban—[8]
They never think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin,
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin;
But just the pouchie put the nieve[9] in,
An' while ought's there
Then, hiltie-skiltie, we gae scrievin,[10]
An' fash nae mair.[11]

[1] your elbow dance and shake. [2] struggle. [3] I'm afraid ye're foolish.
[4] squirm. [5] let off; excused.
[6] be spared who like; i.e., whoever else may be spared.
[7] splitting words to make them rime.
[8] the devil have my soul that I should curse them.
[9] but just a pocket to put the fist in.
[10] then helter-skelter we go reeling. [11] and worry no more.

Leeze me on rhyme![1] it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure;
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough an' raploch[2] be her measure.
She's seldom lazy.

Haud[3] to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even tho' limpin wi' the spavie[4]
Frae door to door!

(1784)

Epistle to J. Lapraik

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD

APRIL 1, 1785

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
And paitricks scraichin[5] loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin seen,[6]
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en[7] we had a rockin,[8]
To ca' the crack[9] and weave our stockin;
And there was muckle fun and jokin,
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin,[10]
At "sang about."[11]

[1] dear is rhyme to me. [2] homespun. [3] hold. [4] spavin.
[5] partridges calling hoarsely. [6] the hare seen scudding.
[7] the evening before Lent. [8] a social meeting. [9] have a chat.
[10] yoking; i.e., a spell corresponding to the time draught animals might work at one job.
[11] a game in which each person sings in his turn.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife;
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain[1] to hear't,
An' sae about him there I spier't;[2]
Then a' that kent him round declar'd
He had ingine;[3]
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce[4] or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches—
'Tween Inverness an' Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh an' graith,[5]
Or die a cadger pownie's[6] death,
At some dyke-back,[7]
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith,
To hear your crack.[8]

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle[9] fell;

[1] tingling with pleasure. [2] enquired. [3] genius. [4] serious.
[5] implements; tools; gear. [6] hawker pony's death.
[7] back of a fence. [8] talk. [9] rhyming.

Tho' rude an' rough—
Yet crooning to a body's sel,
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer like by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence;
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns[1] an' stools?
If honest Nature made you fools,
What sairs[2] your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,[3]
Or knappin-hammers.[4]

A set o' dull, conceited hashes[5]
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks,[6] and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then, tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

[1] ink-horns. [2] serves. [3] shovels. [4] hammers for breaking stone.
[5] dunderheads. [6] young bullocks or heifers over a year old.

O for a spunk[1] o' Allan's[2] glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld an' slee,[3]
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear[4] eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few;
Yet, if your catalogue be fow,
I'se no[5] insist:
But, gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel,
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends, an' folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose[6] me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack[7] they wheedle frae me
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline Race, or Mauchline Fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather;
And hae a swap o' rhymin-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,[8]
An' kirsen him wi' reekin[9] water;

[1] spark. [2] Allan Ramsay. See p. 371.
[3] the bold and ingenious Robert Fergusson See p. 725.
[4] learning. [5] I shall not. [6] praise.
[7] four pennies Scots, a little less than a cent.
[8] we shall cause him to make a noise.
[9] christen him with steaming water.

Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,[1]
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish, warly race,
Wha think that havins,[2] sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship, should give place
To Catch-the-Plack![3]
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle,
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,[4]
Who am most fervent,
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

(1785)

Epistle to the Rev. John M'Math[5]

INCLOSING A COPY OF "HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER," WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED, SEPT. 17, 1785

WHILE at the stook[6] the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin[7] show'r,
Or in gulravage, rinnin, scowr;[8]
To pass the time,

[1] a hearty draught. [2] good manners. [3] hunt the coin.
[4] tingle with delight.
[5] John McMath (1781–1825) was a friend of Burns and had similar tastes.
[6] shock of sheaves. [7] pelting.
[8] in horseplay run and scurry around.

To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Musie, tir'd wi' monie a sonnet
On gown an' ban,[1] an' douse black-bonnet,
Is grown right eerie[2] now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathém[3] her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple, countra bardie,
Should meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Louse Hell upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin, cantin, grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an' hauf-mile graces,
Their raxin[4] conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
Waur nor[5] their nonsense.

There's Gau'n,[6] misca'd[7] waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honor in his breast
Than monie scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus't him.
And may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed—
An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
By worthless skellums,[8]
An' not a Muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?[9]

[1] band worn by the clergy. [2] fearful.
[3] make her anathema; curse her. [4] elastic. [5] worse than.
[6] Gavin Hamilton (1751–1805). See "Holy Willie's Prayer," p. 834.
[7] miscalled; abused. [8] good-for-nothings. [9] blusterers.

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd!

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass;
But mean revenge, an' malice fause[1]
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what? to gie their malice skouth[2]
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin streight.

All hail, Religion! Maid divine!
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatise false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't an' foul wi' monie a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those

[1] false. [2] scope.

Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit!

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound,
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which gies ye honor),
Ev'n, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have taen,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

(1785)

Holy Willie's[1] *Prayer*

And send the godly in a pet to pray.—POPE[2]

ARGUMENT

HOLY Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr. Gavin Hamilton—Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the Muse overheard him at his devotions as follows—

O THOU that in the heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell
A' for Thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done before Thee!

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserv'd most just damnation
For broken laws

[1] Holy Willie was William Fisher (1737–1809), elder in the parish church of Mauchline; was probably the informer against Gavin Hamilton for neglect of ordinances and violation of the Sabbath; was himself in 1790 rebuked by the minister for drunkenness. The presbytery ruled that Hamilton was "free from public scandal or ground of church censure known to us."—*The Cambridge "Burns."*

[2] "Rape of the Lock," IV, 64.

Sax thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause!

When from my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plung'd me deep in Hell,
To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail
In burning lakes,
Whare damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample:
I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' Thy flock.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must;
At times I'm fash'd[1] wi' fleshly lust;
An' sometimes, too, in warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled wi' sin.

O Lord! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg—
O may 't ne'er be a living plague
To my dishonour!
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun avow—
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times, I trow—
But, Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I cam near her,
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer[2] her.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,

[1] troubled. [2] meddle with; molest.

Lest he owre proud and high should turn
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne
Until Thou lift it.

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou has a chosen race!
But God confound their stubborn face
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' open shame!

Lord, mind Gau'n Hamilton's deserts:
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin arts
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain Priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

And when we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,[1]
And set the warld in a roar
O' laughin at us:
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes!

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that Presbyt'ry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upo' their heads!
Lord, visit them, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

O Lord, my God! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
An' pish'd wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,[2]
Held up his head.

[1] bred such a row. [2] sneering.

Lord, in Thy day o' vengeance try him!
Lord, visit him wha did employ him!
And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their pray'r,
But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
An' dinna spare!

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine,
That I for grace an' gear[1] may shine
Excell'd by nane;
And a' the glory shall be Thine—
Amen, Amen!

(1785)

The Holy Fair[2]

A robe of seeming truth and trust
His crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad
He wrapt him in Religion.

—Hypocrisy à-la-mode.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller[3] air.
The rising sun owre Galston Muirs
Wi' glorious light was glintin;
The hares were hirplin down the furs,[4]
The lav'rocks[5] they were chantin
Fu' sweet that day.

[1] goods.
[2] Holy Fair is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.—*Burns.*
[3] fresh. [4] limping down the furrows. [5] larks.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin[1] up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart[2] lining;
The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes;[3]
Their visage wither'd, lang an' thin,
An' sour as onie slaes:[4]
The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as onie lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, an' laughin as she spak,
An' taks me by the han's,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en the feck[5]
Of a' the Ten Comman's
A screed[6] some day.

"My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,
To spend an hour in daffin:[7]
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd[8] pair,
We will get famous laughin
At them this day."

[1] hurrying. [2] grey. [3] clothes. [4] sloe berries.
[5] have given the bulk. [6] a rip or rent. [7] fun. [8] wrinkled.

Quoth I, "Wi' a' my heart, I'll do 't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark[1] on,
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,[2]
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

Here, farmers gash, in ridin graith,[3]
Gaed hoddin by their cotters;[4]
There swankies[5] young, in braw braidclaith,
Are springin owre the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,[6]
In silks an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,[7]
An' farls,[8] bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump[9] that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr black-bonnet[10] throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show:
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin;
Some carryin dails,[11] some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy bleth'rin[12]
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
An' screen our countra gentry;
There Racer Jess, and twa-three whores,
Are blinkin at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin' jads,
Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck;
An' there a batch o' wabster lads,

[1] shirt. [2] porridge-time. [3] self-complacent farmers in riding attire.
[4] jogging by their cottagers. [5] strapping fellows.
[6] hastening barefoot crowded. [7] thick slice. [8] small, thin oat-cakes.
[9] crisp.
[10] The black-bonneted elder who took the collection at the door.
[11] planks. [12] talking nonsense.

Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,[1]
Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps, at watch,
Thrang winkin on the lasses
To chairs that day.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Whase ain dear lass that he likes best,
Comes clinkin[2] down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof[3] upon her bosom,
Unkend that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation:
For Moodie speels[4] the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin an' thumpin!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin, and he's jumpin!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch[5] squeel an' gestures,

[1] sample. [2] dropping down quickly. [3] the palm of the hand.
[4] Rev. Alexander Moodie of Riccarton climbs, i.e, enters.
[5] unearthly.

Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian[1] plaisters
On sic a day!

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;
There's peace an' rest nae langer;
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith[2] opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral pow'rs an' reason?
His English style, an' gesture fine
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;[3]
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,[4]
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While Common Sense has taen the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate
Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller[5] niest the guard relieves,
An' orthodoxy raibles,[6]

[1] made of cantharides, formerly considered an aphrodisiac.
[2] Rev. George Smith of Galston. [3] doctrine.
[4] Rev. William Peebles of The Water-fit (the mouth of the river) or Newton-upon-Ayr.
[5] Rev. Alexander Miller. [6] rattles off.

Tho' in his heart he weel believes
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the birkie[1] wants a manse;
So, cannilie he hums them;[2]
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-wise[3] o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now butt an' ben[4] the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup[5] commentators;
Here's crying out for bakes an' gills,
And there the pint-stowp[6] clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college;
It kindles wit, it waukens lear,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky-gill, or penny wheep,[7]
Or onie stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin deep,
To kittle[8] up our notion,
By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An' forming assignations
To meet some day.

[1] smart young fellow. [2] cunningly he fools them. [3] half-wise.
[4] The butt was the outer apartment or kitchen, the ben the inner one, or parlor in the Scottish cottage.
[5] ale-mug. [6] pint measure (two English quarts). [7] small ale.
[8] tickle.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin,
And echoes back return the shouts;
Black Russell[1] is na spairin:
His piercin words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' hell, whare devils dwell,
Our verra "sauls does harrow"
Wi' fright that day!

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin brunstane,[2]
Whase ragin flame, an' scorchin heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane![3]
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin,
When presently it does appear
'Twas but some neebor snorin
Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell,
How monie stories past;
An' how they crouded to the yill,[4]
When they were a' dismist;
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,[5]
Amang the furms an' benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds[6] that day.

In comes a gawsie, gash[7] guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck[8] an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,

[1] Rev. John Russell, ordained at Kilmarnock in 1774, was a Calvinist of the sternest type, with a dark and morose visage and a tremendous voice.
[2] flaming brimstone. [3] millstone. [4] ale
[5] in wooden bowls and cups. [6] large portions.
[7] buxom and jolly; talkative and self-complacent. [8] cheese.

An' gies them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie[1] his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu' ance yoursel
How bonie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna for a kebbuck-heel
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now, Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin tow,[2]
Begins to jow an' croon;[3]
Some swagger hame the best they dow,[4]
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps[5] the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon;
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink
They're a' in famous tune
For crack[6] that day.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
As saft as onie flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin,
May end in houghmagandie[7]
Some ither day.

(1785)

[1] dust with meal. [2] bell-rope. [3] swing and boom. [4] can.
[5] at gaps in the fence the young fellows halt a bit. [6] talk.
[7] fornication.

The Cotter's Saturday Night

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.
—Gray.

MY LOV'D, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise.
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn cotter frae his labor goes,—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,—
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher[1] through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin'[2] noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle,[3] blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh[4] and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

[1] stagger. [2] fluttering. [3] fireplace; fire. [4] anxiety.

Belyve,[1] the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca[2] the pleugh, some herd, some tentie[3] rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:[4]
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tell the uncos[5] that he sees or hears.
The parents partial eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent[6] hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk[7] or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins[8] is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

[1] presently. [2] drive. [3] careful.
[4] a farm with its collection of buildings. [5] unusual news. [6] diligent.
[7] trifle. [8] partly.

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;[1]
A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks[2] of horses, pleughs, and kye.[3]
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate[4] and laithfu',[5] scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.[6]

O happy love! where love like this is found:
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling, smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch,[7] chief of Scotia's food;
The soupe[8] their only hawkie[9] does afford,
That 'yont[10] the hallan[11] snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her well-hain'd kebbuck,[12] fell;[13]
And aft[14] he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;

[1] in. [2] talks. [3] cows. [4] shy. [5] bashful. [6] rest; others.
[7] wholesome porridge; oatmeal. [8] milk. [9] white-faced cow.
[10] beyond. [11] partition. [12] well-saved cheese. [13] strong.
[14] often.

The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond[1] auld, sin' lint[2] was i' the bell.[3]

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible,[4] ance his father's pride.
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[5] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[6] a portion with judicious care,
And, "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps *Dundee's*[7] wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*,[7] worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin*[7] beets[8] the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,—
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal bard[9] did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;

[1] twelve-month. [2] since flax. [3] blossom. [4] hall-Bible.
[5] gray locks or temples. [6] chooses. [7] a sacred melody. [8] kindles.
[9] David.

The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he,[1] who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"[2]
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart.
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Divine preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,

[1] John. [2] Pope: "Windsor Forest," l. 112.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."[1]
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

O Thou, who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part.
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

(1785)

To a Mouse

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

WEE, sleekit,[2] cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickering brattle![3]

[1] Pope: "Essay on Man," iv, 248. [2] sleek. [3] sudden scamper.

I wad be laith[1] to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle![2]

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow mortal!

I doubt na, whyles,[3] but thou may thieve;
What then? Poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave[4]
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,[5]
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big[6] a new ane,
O' foggage[7] green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith snell[8] an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But[9] house or hald,[10]
To thole[11] the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch[12] cauld!

[1] would be loath. [2] plough-staff. [3] at times.
[4] an occasional ear in a shock (of twenty-fours heaves).
[5] remainder. [6] build [7] rank grass. [8] sharp. [9] without.
[10] abode. [11] endure. [12] hoar-frost.

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,[1]
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

(1785)

Address to the Deil

O Prince! O Chief of many throned pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war!
—MILTON.[2]

O THOU! whatever title suit thee—
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie[3]
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges[4] about the brunstane cootie,[5]
To scaud[6] poor wretches!

Hear me, Auld Hangie,[7] for a wee,[8]
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp[9] an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel.

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's[10] thy hame,

[1] awry. [2] "Paradise Lost," I, 128–9. [3] a clootie; a little hoof.
[4] splashes. [5] brimstone tub. [6] scald. [7] old hangman.
[8] moment. [9] slap. [10] flaming cavern.

Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag,[1] nor lame,
Nor blate, nor scaur.[2]

Whyles,[3] ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners trying;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;[4]
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruin'd castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.[5]

When twilight did my graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,[6]
Wi' eerie drone;[7]
Or, rustlin thro' the boortrees[8] comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The star shot down wi' sklentin'[9] light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright:
Ayont the lough,[10]
Ye, like a rash-buss,[11] stood in sight,
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve[12] did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor[13] "quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings.

[1] slow. [2] shy nor timid. [3] sometimes. [4] unroofing the churches. [5] unearthly moan. [6] humming. [7] ghostly sound. [8] elders. [9] slanting [10] beyond the lake. [11] bush of rushes. [12] fist. [13] hoarse.

Let warlocks[1] grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,[2]
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues[3]
Owre howkit[4] dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn[5] in vain;
For O! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit,[6] twal-pint hawkie's[7] gaen
As yell's the bill.[8]

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen,[9] fond, keen, an' croose;[10]
When the best wark-lume[11] i' the house,
By cantraip[12] wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.[13]

When thowes[14] dissolve the snawy hoord,[15]
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,[16]
Then, water-kelpies[17] haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

And aft[18] your moss-traversing spunkies[19]
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is;
The bleezin,[20] curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

[1] wizards.
[2] rag-weed stems used instead of broomsticks, for horses.
[3] covenants. [4] dug-up. [5] churn. [6] petted.
[7] twelve-pint white-faced cow's. [8] as dry as the bull.
[9] newly-married men. [10] bold; sure. [11] work-loom. [12] magic.
[13] at the time most needed. [14] thaws. [15] snowy hoard.
[16] surface of ice. [17] river-demons (usually horses). [18] often.
[19] will-o'-the-wisps. [20] blazing.

When Masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straight to hell.

Lang syne[1] in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing[2] dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog,
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue[3]
(Black be your fa'![4]),
An' gied the infant warld a shog,[5]
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D' ye mind that day when in a bizz,[6]
Wi' reekit[7] duds, an' reestit gizz,[8]
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented[9] on the man of Uzz[10]
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw;
And lows'd[11] his ill-tongu'd, wicked scaul,[12]
Was warst ava?[13]

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,

[1] long since. [2] latch-lifting; intruding. [3] trick. [4] lot. [5] shock.
[6] flurry. [7] smoky. [8] singed face. [9] squinted; directed. [10] Job.
[11] let loose. [12] scold. [13] worst of all.

Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,[1]
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin[2]
To your black pit:
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,[3]
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, Auld Nickie-ben!
O, wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins[4] might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake:[5]
I'm wae[6] to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

(1785)

A Bard's Epitaph

Is THERE a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate[7] to seek, owre proud to snool?[8]
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,[9]
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this aréa throng?—
O, pass not by!
But with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,

[1] would baffle a Lowland tongue or Gaelic. [2] skipping; tripping.
[3] dodging. [4] perhaps. [5] have a place or standing. [6] sad.
[7] shy. [8] cringe; crawl. [9] sorrow.

Yet runs, himself, life's mad career
Wild as the wave?—
Here pause—and thro' the starting tear
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name.

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious, self-control
Is wisdom's root.

(1786)

Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them ay thegither:
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight[1]
May hae some pyles o' caff[2] *in;*
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.[3]
SOLOMON.—*Eccles.*, 7:16.

O YE who are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebors' fauts[4] and folly;
Whase life is like a weel-gaun[5] mill,

[1] winnowed. [2] grains of chaff. [3] fun. [4] faults. [5] well-going.

Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapet happer's[1] ebbing still,
An' still the clap[2] plays clatter!

Hear me, ye venerable core,[3]
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce[4] Wisdom's door
For glaikit[5] Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone[6] defences—
Their donsie[7] tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,[8]
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?[9]
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

See Social-life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmogrify'd,[10] they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O, would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences,
Or—your more dreadful hell to state—
Damnation of expenses!

[1] heaped-up hopper's. [2] clapper. [3] corps; company. [4] grave. [5] giddy. [6] propose. [7] unlucky. [8] exchange. [9] difference. [10] transformed.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treach'rous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,[1]
Ye're aiblins[2] nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin[3] wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far, perhaps, they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

(1786)

To a Mountain Daisy

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

WEE, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure[4]
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

[1] car. [2] perhaps. [3] trifle. [4] dust.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast!
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's[1] maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield[2]
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie[3] stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean, luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card[4]
Of prudent lore,

[1] walls. [2] shelter. [3] dry; bare. [4] compass-card.

Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

(1786)

To a Louse

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH

HA! WHARE ye gaun, ye crowlin[1] ferlie?[2]
Your impudence protects you sairly:[3]
I canna say but ye strunt[4] rarely
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,[5]
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit[6] upon her—
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith![7] in some beggar's hauffet[8] squattle;[9]
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,[10]

[1] crawling. [2] wonder. [3] greatly. [4] strut. [5] blasted wonder.
[6] foot. [7] quick. [8] temples. [9] sprawl. [10] struggle.

Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn[1] nor bane[2] ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud[3] you there! ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils,[4] snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet![5] ye'll no be right
'Till ye've got on it—
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' gray as onie grozet;[6]
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,[7]
Or fell, red smeddum,[8]
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.[9]

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;[10]
Or aiblins[11] some bit duddie[12] boy,
On's wyliecoat;[13]
But Miss's fine Lunardi![14] fye!
How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread![15]
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's[16] makin!
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O wad some Power the giftie[17] gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!

[1] horn-comb. [2] small-toothed comb. [3] hold. [4] ribbon-ends.
[5] See line 5. [6] gooseberry. [7] rosin. [8] powder. [9] breech
[10] flannel cap. [11] perhaps [12] small ragged. [13] flannel vest.
[14] balloon-bonnet (named after Lunardi, a famous aeronaut).
[15] abroad. [16] blasted. [17] small gift.

It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

(1786)

The Silver Tassie[1]

Go, FETCH to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonie lassie!
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes deep and bloody.
It's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar—
It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary.

(1788)

Of A' the Airts[2]

Of A' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,[3]
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

[1] goblet. [2] directions. [3] roll.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw,[1] or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

(1788)

Auld Lang Syne

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,[2]
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,[3]
And pou'd[4] the gowans[5] fine;
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit[6]
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl'd[7] in the burn,[8]
Frae morning sun till dine;[9]
But seas between us braid[10] hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

[1] wood. [2] be good for your three-pint measure. [3] hillsides.
[4] pulled. [5] daisies. [6] foot. [7] paddled. [8] brook.
[9] dinner-time. [10] broad.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,[1]
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught[2]
For auld lang syne.

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

(1788)

Whistle O'er the Lave O't[3]

FIRST when Maggie was my care,
Heav'n, I thought, was in her air;
Now we're married—spier nae mair—
But—whistle o'er the lave o't!
Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
Sweet and harmless as a child:
Wiser men than me's beguil'd—
Whistle o'er the lave o't!

How we live, my Meg and me,
How we love, and how we gree,[4]
I care na by[5] how few may see—
Whistle o'er the lave o't!
Wha I wish were maggots' meat,
Dish'd up in her winding-sheet,
I could write (but Meg wad see't)—
Whistle o'er the lave o't!

(1789)

[1] comrade. [2] hearty, good-will draught. [3] rest of it. [4] agree.
[5] I care not.

My Heart's in the Highlands

CHORUS

MY HEART'S in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.
Farewell to the mountains, high-cover'd with snow,
Farewell to the straths[1] and green valleys below,
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

CHORUS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

(1789)

John Anderson My Jo[2]

JOHN ANDERSON my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;[3]
But now your brow is beld,[4] John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,[5]
John Anderson my jo!

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;

[1] broad vales. [2] sweetheart. [3] smooth. [4] bald. [5] head.

And monie a cantie[1] day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

(1789)

Sweet Afton

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes![2]
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering fair!

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills!
There daily I wander, as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk[3] shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy clear wave!

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes!
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

(1789)

[1] happy. [2] hills. [3] birch.

Willie Brew'd a Peck of Maut

CHORUS

WE ARE na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie[1] in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley-bree![2]

O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang[3] night,
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And monie a night we've merry been,
And monie mae[4] we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift[5] sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle[6] us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!

CHORUS

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

(1789)

[1] small drop. [2] brew. [3] live-long. [4] more. [5] sky. [6] entice.

Tam Glen

MY HEART is a-breaking, dear tittie,[1]
Some counsel unto me come len'.
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith[2] I might mak a fen'.[3]
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie, the laird o' Drumeller:
"Guid day to you"—brute! he comes ben:[4]
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie[5] does constantly deave[6] me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me—
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin[7] I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me guid hunder marks[8] ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
O, wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the valentines' dealing,
My heart to my mou gied a sten,[9]
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written, "Tam Glen"!

The last Halloween I was waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve,[10] as ye ken;[11]

[1] sister [2] poverty [3] shift. [4] in. [5] mother. [6] deafen.
[7] if. [8] Scotch coins, worth 26 cents each. [9] gave a leap.
[10] watching my drenched shirtsleeve.
[11] "*You go out, one or more* (for this is a social spell), to a south-running spring, or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question [future husband], will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side."—*Burns's note on "Halloween." st. xxiv.*

His likeness cam up the house staukin,[1]
And the very gray breeks[2] o' Tam Glen!

Come, counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry!
I'll gie you my bonie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

(1789)

Thou Ling'ring Star

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity cannot efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

[1] stalking. [2] breeches.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes
And fondly broods with miser-care.
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

(1789)

Tam O' Shanter

A Tale

Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke.
—Gawin Douglas.

When chapman billies[1] leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet;
As market-days are wearin late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;[2]
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' gettin' fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,[3]
The mosses, waters, slaps,[4] and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.
This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).
O Tam, hadst thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee well thou was a skellum.
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;

[1] peddler fellows. [2] take their way,—*i.e.*, go home.
[3] The old Scotch mile was 216 yards longer than the English mile.
[4] gaps; openings in fences.

That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder[1] wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd[2] a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.
Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet[3]
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!
But to our tale:—Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter[4] Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie;
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious;
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.
Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!
But pleasures are like poppies spread;

[1] every grist or grinding. [2] driven. [3] makes me weep.
[4] cobbler.

You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.
Weel-mounted on his gray mare, Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit[1] on thro' dub[2] and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;[3]
And past the birks[4] and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neckbane;
And thro' the whins,[5] and by the cairn,[6]
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;

[1] clattered. [2] puddle. [3] smothered. [4] birches. [5] fur. [6] stone-heap.

The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,[1]
Thro' ilka bore[2] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.
Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny,[3] we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae,[4] we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.[5]
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,[6]
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At winnock-bunker[7] in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke,[8] black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,[9]
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.[10]
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,[11]
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;

[1] blaze. [2] every chink. [3] two-penny ale. [4] whiskey.
[5] farthing. [6] Scottish dances. [7] window-seat.
[8] tousled, shaggy cur. [9] made them shriek. [10] ring.
[11] magic trick

Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
The gray-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible an' awefu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.
As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,[1]
Till ilka carlin[2] swat and reekit,[3]
And coost her duddies to the wark,[4]
And linket at it in her sark![5]
Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,[6]
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' cresshie[7] flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen![8]
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,[9]
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies![10]
But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie[11] hags wad spean[12] a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,[13]
I wonder did na turn thy stomach!
But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,[14]
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,[15]
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty[16] sark, o' Paisley harn,[17]

[1] took hold. [2] each old woman. [3] sweated and steamed.
[4] cast her clothes to the work. [5] went at it in her shift. [6] wenches.
[7] greasy. [8] very fine linen, with 1700 threads to a width. [9] hips.
[10] lasses. [11] lean; skinny. [12] wean (by disgust). [13] a crooked staff.
[14] robust. [15] barley. [16] short [17] coarse linen.

That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.[1]
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[2] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots[3] ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!
But here my Muse her wing maun cour;[4]
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang[5]
(A souple jad she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd[6] and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint[7] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,[8]
When plundering herds[9] assail their byke;[10]
As open[11] pussie's[12] mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch[13] skriech and hollo.
Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin![14]
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;[15]
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,

[1] proud. [2] bought. [3] A pound Scots was worth about forty cents.
[4] must lower. [5] leaped and kicked. [6] hitched; jerked. [7] lost.
[8] fuss. [9] herders of cattle. [10] hive. [11] give tongue.
[12] the hare's. [13] unearthly.
[14] reward (literally, a present from the fair). [15] bridge.

A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient[1] a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;[2]
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught[3] her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

(1790)

Ye Flowery Banks

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,

[1] devil. [2] intention; aim. [3] seized.

And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Frae aff its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw[1] my rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

(1791)

Ae Fond Kiss

AE FOND kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage[2] thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy;
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

(1791)

[1] stole. [2] pledge.

The Deil's Awa wi' th' Exciseman

THE deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

The deil cam fiddlin thro' the town
And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries: "Auld Mahoun,[1]
I wish you luck o' the prize, man!

"We'll mak our maut, we'll brew our drink,
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
And monie braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman."

There's threesome reels,[2] there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys,[3] man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
Was *The Deil's Awa wi' th' Exciseman.*

CHORUS

The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

(1792)

Saw Ye Bonie Lesley

O, SAW ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

[1] Old Mahomet (an ancient name for the Devil).
[2] reels in which three take part. [3] Lively Scottish dances.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her forever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley—
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley—
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The deil he could na skaith[1] thee,
Nor aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonie face,
And say: "I canna wrang thee."

The Powers aboon will tent[2] thee,
Misfortune sha' na steer[3] thee:
Thou'rt like themsel' sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonie.

(1792)

Highland Mary

Ye banks and braes[4] and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie![5]
There Summer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel,
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,[6]
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,

[1] injure. [2] take care of. [3] molest. [4] small hills. [5] muddy. [6] birch.

As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder.
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly;
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

(1792)

Duncan Gray

Duncan Gray cam here to woo
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!),
On blythe Yule Night when we were fou
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,[1]
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh[2]—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Duncan fleech'd,[3] and Duncan pray'd
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!);

[1] skittish. [2] aloof. [3] wheedled.

Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat[1] his een baith bleer't an' blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn[2]—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Time and chance are but a tide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Slighted love is sair to bide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
"Shall I, like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to—France for me!"—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

How it comes let doctors tell
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Meg grew sick as he grew hale
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings,
And O! her een, they spak sic things!—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

Duncan was a lad o' grace
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!).
Maggie's was a piteous case
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't!):
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty[3] baith—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

(1792)

[1] wept. [2] leaping over a waterfall. [3] cheerful and jolly.

Scots, Wha Hae

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's[1] power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?—
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa';
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do or die!

(1793)

Last May a Braw Wooer

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair[2] wi' his love he did deave[3] me.
I said there was naething I hated like men:
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, believe me—
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me!

[1] Edward II of England. [2] sorely. [3] deafen.

He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dyin.
I said, he might die when he liket for Jean:
The Lord forgie me for lyin, for lyin—
The Lord forgie me for lyin!

A weel-stocket mailen,[1] himsel for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers—
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? In a fortnight or less
(The Deil tak his taste to gae near her!)
He up the Gate-Slack to my black cousin, Bess!
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her—
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week, as I petted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste[2] o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there?
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock—
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neebours might say I was saucy.
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie—
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin,
And how her new shoon fit her auld, shachl'd[3] feet—
But heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin—
But heavens! how he fell a swearin!

He begged, for Gudesake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
So, e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him tomorrow, tomorrow—
I think I maun wed him tomorrow!

(1794)

[1] farm. [2] went to the fair. [3] shapeless.

A Red, Red Rose

O, MY luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

(1794)

My Nanie's Awa

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw;[1]
But to me it's delightless—my Nanie's awa!

The snawdrap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw;
They mind me o' Nanie—and Nanie's awa!

Thou lav'rock,[2] that springs frae the dews of th' lawn
The shepherd to warn o' the gray-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis,[3] that hails the night-fa,
Give over for pity—my Nanie's awa.

[1] every green wood. [2] lark. [3] thrush.

Come autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' Nature's decay:
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw
Alane can delight me—now Nanie's awa.

(1794)

Contented wi' Little

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie[1] wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' Sorrow and Care,
I gie them a skelp,[2] as they're creepin alang,
Wi' a cog[3] o' guid swats[4] and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles[5] claw[6] the elbow o' troublesome Thought;
But man is a soger,[7] and life is a faught;[8]
My mirth and guid humor are coin in my pouch,
And my Freedom's my lairdship nae monarch daur touch.

A towmond[9] o' trouble, should that be my fa',[10]
A night o' guid fellowship sowthers[11] it a':
When at the blythe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte[12] on her way;
Be 't to me, be 't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come Ease, or come Travail, come Pleasure or Pain,
My warst word is, "Welcome, and welcome again!"

(1794)

Lassie wi' the Lint-white[13] *Locks*

CHORUS

LASSIE wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

[1] merry. [2] slap. [3] cup. [4] ale. [5] sometimes. [6] scratch.
[7] soldier. [8] fight. [9] twelve-month. [10] lot. [11] solders; mends.
[12] stumble and stagger. [13] flax-colored.

Now Nature cleeds[1] the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee,
O wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
The wanton lambs at early morn,
Shall welcome thee, my dearie, O.

And when the welcome simmer shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine-bower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way,
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
Enclasped to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

CHORUS

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

(1794)

Is There for Honest Poverty

Is THERE for honest poverty,
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by—
We dare be poor for a' that!

[1] clothes.

For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin gray,[1] an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie,[2] ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif[3] for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might—
Guid faith, he mauna fa'[4] that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that)
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree[5] an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that!

(1794)

[1] coarse gray cloth. [2] young fellow. [3] dolt. [4] claim. [5] prize.

O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,[1]
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[2] should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

(1796)

[1] direction. [2] shelter.

William Blake

1757–1827

WILLIAM BLAKE, the son of a well-to-do hosier (or, according to the story told by William Butler Yeats, of a runaway Irishman named O'Neil, who married Ellen Blake and took her name), was born in London on November 28, 1757. At the age of ten he became a pupil in Par's drawing school, where he drew from the antique; and in 1771 he was apprenticed to James Basire, an engraver to the Society of Antiquaries. In the summer Basire set him to drawing monuments in Westminster Abbey, where was instilled in him a love of Gothic. He had also done some verses, later to be published in his "Poetical Sketches," and had had visions of angelic figures walking among the haymakers, or a tree full of angels, or the prophet Ezekiel. He carried on his art studies in the Royal Academy in 1778 and began a series of engravings, from designs by Stothard, for books—"Don Quixote," "A Sentimental Journey," etc. His marriage in 1782 to Catherine Boucher, who could only make her mark in the register of the church, turned out to be very happy. His first volume, "Poetical Sketches," appeared in the next year. In 1784 he and his fellow-engraver Parker opened a printseller's shop, but they closed it three years later. In 1789, unable to find a publisher for his "Songs of Innocence," he and his wife designed and engraved the book, one of the finest things he ever did. The same year "The Book of Thel" appeared. In 1791 he designed and engraved plates for books by Mary Wollstonecraft. At the same time he was brought into association with leading political and religious radicals, including Price, Priestly, Tom Paine, and Godwin, and he dared to appear in the streets of London with the *bonnet rouge* on his head. His capacity for work seemed to have no limit, for in 1793 he made 537 illustrations for Young's "Night Thoughts," of which only 47 were engraved. In 1794 the second volume by which he is well known, "The Songs of Experience," appeared. On the invitation of Squire Hayley, in 1800, he settled for three years at Felpham and made designs for Hayley's books, did the Canterbury Pilgrimage as a fresco, and illustrated Blair's "The Grave." In 1804 he returned to London, where he stayed for the rest of his life. He exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1808 for the last time. He busied himself with engravings for his prophetic

books, and made a series of drawings for the "Divina Commedia." He died on August 12, 1827.

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To Spring

O THOU with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell each other, and the list'ning
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth,
And let thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head,
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee!

(1783)

To Winter

"O WINTER! bar thine adamantine doors:
The north is thine; there hast thou built thy dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy roofs,
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car."

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep
Rides heavy; his storms are unchain'd, sheathed
In ribbed steel; I dare not lift mine eyes,
For he hath rear'd his sceptre o'er the world.

Lo! now the direful monster, whose skin clings
To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning rocks:
He withers all in silence, and his hand
Unclothes the earth, and freezes up frail life.

He takes his seat upon the cliffs,—the mariner
Cries in vain. Poor little wretch! that deal'st
With storms!—till heaven smiles, and the monster
Is driv'n yelling to his caves beneath Mount Hecla.

(1783)

How Sweet I Roam'd

How sweet I roam'd from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He show'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fir'd my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

(1783)

My Silks and Fine Array

My silks and fine array,
My smiles and languish'd air,
By love are driv'n away;
And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave:
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heav'n
When springing buds unfold;
O, why to him was't giv'n
Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is love's all-worship'd tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made,
Let winds and tempests beat:
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay.
True love doth pass away!

(1783)

To the Muses

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceas'd;

Whether in Heav'n ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wand'ring in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!

(1783)

Introduction to "Songs of Innocence"

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he, laughing, said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again";
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer":
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down, and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanish'd from my sight,
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

(1789)

The Echoing Green

THE sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
"Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the echoing green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening green.

(1789)

The Lamb

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.

He is meek, and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

(1789)

Holy Thursday

'T WAS on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two, in red and blue and green,
Grey-headed beadles walk'd before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames' waters flow.

Oh what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

(1789)

A Dream

ONCE a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet[1] lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

[1] an ant.

Troubled, 'wilder'd, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke I heard her say:

"Oh my children! do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see:
Now return and weep for me."

Pitying, I drop'd a tear;
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied: "What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

"I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wanderer, hie thee home!"

(1789)

The Shepherd

How sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot!
From the morn to the evening he strays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their shepherd is nigh.

(1789)

The Little Black Boy

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun,—there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy:
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

(1789)

A Cradle Song

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.

Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles, in the night
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, Mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smil'd;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy Maker lay and wept for me,

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

(1789)

Laughing Song

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing "Ha, ha, he!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he!"

(1789)

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too.

(1789)

The Book of Thel

Thel's Motto

Does the Eagle know what is in the pit?
Or wilt thou go ask the Mole?
Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod,
Or Love in a golden bowl?

I

THE daughters of the Seraphim led round their sunny flocks,
All but the youngest: she in paleness sought the secret air,
To fade away like morning beauty from her mortal day:
Down by the river of Adona her soft voice is heard,
And thus her gentle lamentation falls like morning dew:

"O life of this our spring! why fades the lotus of the water?
Why fade these children of the spring, born but to smile and fall?
Ah! Thel is like a wat'ry bow, and like a parting cloud;
Like a reflection in a glass; like shadows in the water;
Like dreams of infants, like a smile upon an infant's face;
Like the dove's voice; like transient day; like music in the air.
Ah! gentle may I lay me down, and gentle rest my head.
And gentle sleep the sleep of death, and gentle hear the voice
Of Him That walketh in the garden in the evening time."

The lily of the valley, breathing in the humble grass,
Answer'd the lovely maid and said: "I am a wat'ry weed,
And I am very small and love to dwell in lowly vales;
So weak, the gilded butterfly scarce perches on my head.
Yet I am visited from heaven; and he that smiles on all
Walks in the valley, and each morn over me spreads his hand,
Saying, 'Rejoice, thou humble grass, thou new-born lily-flower,
Thou gentle maid of silent valleys and of modest brooks;

For thou shalt be clothed in light, and fed with morning manna,
Till summer's heat melts thee beside the fountains and the springs
To flourish in eternal vales.' Then why should Thel complain?
Why should the mistress of the vales of Har utter a sigh?"

She ceas'd, and smil'd in tears, then sat down in her silver shrine.

Thel answer'd: "O thou little virgin of the peaceful valley,
Giving to those that cannot crave, the voiceless, the o'ertired;
Thy breath doth nourish the innocent lamb, he smells thy milky garments,
He crops thy flowers while thou sittest smiling in his face,
Wiping his mild and meekin mouth from all contagious taints.
Thy wine doth purify the golden honey; thy perfume,
Which thou dost scatter on every little blade of grass that springs,
Revives the milked cow, and tames the fire-breathing steed.
But Thel is like a faint cloud kindled at the rising sun:
I vanish from my pearly throne, and who shall find my place?"

"Queen of the vales," the lily answer'd, "ask the tender cloud,
And it shall tell thee why it glitters in the morning sky,
And why it scatters its bright beauty through the humid air.
Descend, O little cloud, and hover before the eyes of Thel."

The cloud descended; and the lily bow'd her modest head,
And went to mind her numerous charge among the verdant grass.

II

"O little cloud," the virgin said, "I charge thee tell to me
Why thou complainest not when in one hour thou fade away:

Then we shall seek thee, but not find. Ah! Thel is like to thee:
I pass away: yet I complain, and no one hears my voice."

The cloud then show'd his golden head and his bright form emerg'd,
Hovering and glittering on the air, before the face of Thel.

"O virgin, know'st thou not our steeds drink of the golden springs
Where Luvah doth renew his horses? Look'st thou on my youth,
And fearest thou, because I vanish and am seen no more,
Nothing remains? O maid, I tell thee, when I pass away,
It is to tenfold life, to love, to peace, and raptures holy:
Unseen descending, weigh my light wings upon balmy flowers,
And court the fair-eyed Dew to take me to her shining tent:
The weeping virgin, trembling kneels before the risen sun,
Till we arise link'd in a golden band and never part,
But walk united, bearing food to all our tender flowers."

"Dost thou, O little cloud? I fear that I am not like thee,
For I walk through the vales of Har, and smell the sweetest flowers,
But I feed not the little flowers; I hear the warbling birds,
But I feed not the warbling birds; they fly and seek their food:
But Thel delights in these no more, because I fade away:
And all shall say, 'Without a use this shining woman liv'd,
Or did she only live to be at death the food of worms?' "

The cloud reclin'd upon his airy throne, and answer'd thus:

"Then if thou art the food of worms, O virgin of the skies,
How great thy use, how great thy blessing! Everything that lives
Lives not alone nor for itself. Fear not, and I will call
The weak worm from its lowly bed, and thou shalt hear its voice.

Come forth, worm of the silent valley, to thy pensive queen."

The helpless worm arose, and sat upon the lily's leaf,
And the bright cloud sail'd on to find his partner in the vale.

III

Then Thel astonish'd view'd the worm upon its dewy bed.

"Art thou a worm? Image of weakness, art thou but a worm?
I see thee like an infant, wrapped in the lily's leaf.
Ah! weep not, little voice, thou canst not speak, but thou canst weep.
Is this a worm? I see thee lay helpless and naked, weeping,
And none to answer, none to cherish thee with mother's smiles."

The clod of clay heard the worm's voice and rais'd her pitying head:
She bow'd over the weeping infant, and her life exhal'd
In milky fondness: then on Thel she fix'd her humble eyes.

"O beauty of the vales of Har! we live not for ourselves.
Thou seest me the meanest thing, and so I am indeed.
My bosom of itself is cold, and of itself is dark;
But he, that loves the lowly, pours his oil upon my head,
And kisses me, and binds his nuptial bands around my breast,
And says, 'Thou mother of my children, I have loved thee,
And I have given thee a crown that none can take away.'
But how this is, sweet maid, I know not, and I cannot know;
I ponder, and I cannot ponder; yet I live and love."

The daughter of beauty wip'd her pitying tears with her white veil,
And said: "Alas! I knew not this, and therefore did I weep.

That God would love a worm I knew, and punish the evil foot
That wilful bruis'd its helpless form; but that he cherish'd it
With milk and oil, I never knew, and therefore did I weep;
And I complain'd in the mild air, because I fade away,
And lay me down in thy cold bed, and leave my shining lot."

"Queen of the vales," the matron clay answer'd, "I heard thy sighs,
And all thy moans flew o'er my roof, but I have call'd them down.
Wilt thou, O queen, enter my house? 'T is given thee to enter
And to return: fear nothing, enter with thy virgin feet."

IV

The eternal gates' terrific porter lifted the northern bar;
Thel enter'd in, and saw the secrets of the land unknown.
She saw the couches of the dead, and where the fibrous roots
Of every heart on earth infixes deep its restless twists;
A land of sorrows and of tears where never smile was seen.

She wander'd in the land of clouds through valleys dark, list'ning
Dolours and lamentations; wailing oft beside a dewy grave
She stood in silence, list'ning to the voices of the ground,
Till to her own grave-plot she came, and there she sat down,
And heard this voice of sorrow breathed from the hollow pit.

"Why cannot the ear be closed to its own destruction?
Or the glist'ning eye to the poison of a smile?
Why are eyelids stor'd with arrows ready drawn,
Where a thousand fighting men in ambush lie?
Or an eye of gifts and graces show'ring fruits and coined gold?
Why a tongue impress'd with honey from every wind?
Why an ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in?
Why a nostril wide inhaling terror, trembling, and affright?

Why a tender curb upon the youthful burning boy?
Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?"

The virgin started from her seat, and with a shriek
Fled back unhinder'd till she came into the vales of Har.

(1789)

The Defiled Sanctuary

I SAW a chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forc'd and forc'd and forc'd;
Down the golden hinges tore.

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white

Vomiting his poison out
On the bread and on the wine.
So I turn'd into a sty,
And laid me down among the swine.

(1793)

The Clod and the Pebble

"LOVE seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet,

But a pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a hell in heaven's despite."

(1794)

Holy Thursday

Is THIS a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduc'd to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

(1794)

Ah, Sunflower

AH, SUNFLOWER! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller's journey is done:

Where the youth pined away with desire,
 And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
 Where my Sunflower wishes to go.

(1794)

The Garden of Love

I WENT to the Garden of Love,
 And saw what I never had seen:
A chapel was built in the midst,
 Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this chapel were shut,
 And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love
 That so many sweet flowers bore;

And I saw it was filled with graves,
 And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
 And binding with briars my joys and desires.

(1794)

A Poison Tree

I WAS angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;

And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veil'd the pole:
In the morning, glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

(1794)

The Chimney-sweeper

A LITTLE black thing among the snow,
Crying "'weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? say?"—
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

"Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

"And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his priest and king,
Who make up a heaven of our misery."

(1794)

Nurse's Song

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisp'rings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise;
Your spring and your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise.

(1794)

A Little Boy Lost

"NOUGHT loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know:

"And, Father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door."

The priest sat by and heard the child,
In trembling zeal he seiz'd his hair:
He led him by his little coat,
And all admir'd the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
"Lo! what a fiend is here!" said he,
"One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most Holy Mystery."

The weeping child could not be heard,
The weeping parents wept in vain;
They strip'd him to his little shirt,
And bound him in an iron chain;

And burn'd him in a holy place,
Where many had been burn'd before:
The weeping parents wept in vain.
Are such things done on Albion's shore?

(1794)

The Human Abstract

PITY would be no more
If we did not make somebody poor;
And mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we.

And mutual fear brings peace,
Till the selfish loves increase;
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears;
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the caterpillar and fly
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat;
And the raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The gods of the earth and sea
Sought through nature to find this tree;
But their search was all in vain:
There grows one in the human brain.

(1794)

The Tiger

Tiger! tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger! tiger! þurning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(1794)

The Mental Traveller[1]

I TRAVEL'D through a land of men,
A land of men and women too;
And heard and saw such dreadful things
As cold earth-wanderers never knew.

For there the babe[2] is born in joy
That was begotten in dire woe;
Just as we reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did sow.

And if the babe is born a boy,
He's given to a woman old,[3]
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.

[1] For an interpretation of this very obscure poem, see Prof. S. Foster Damon's "William Blake, his Philosophy and Symbols," pp. 129 ff. The following notes indicate his interpretation of the poem:
[2] The Spirit of Revolt. [3] The goddess of material Nature.

She binds iron thorns around his head,
She pierces both his hands and feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side,
To make it feel both cold and heat.

Her fingers number every nerve,
Just as a miser counts his gold;
She lives upon his shrieks and cries,
And she grows young as he grows old.

Till he becomes a bleeding youth,
And she becomes a virgin bright;
Then he rends up his manacles,
And binds her down for his delight.[1]

He plants himself in all her nerves,
Just as a husbandman his mould;
And she becomes his dwelling-place
And garden fruitful seventy-fold.

An aged shadow, soon he fades,
Wand'ring round an earthly cot,
Full-filled all with gems and gold
Which he by industry had got.

And these are the gems of the human soul,
The rubies and pearls of a love-sick eye,
The countless gold of the aching heart,
The martyr's groan and the lover's sigh.

They are his meat, they are his drink;
He feeds the beggar and the poor
And the wayfaring traveller:
Forever open is his door.

His grief is their eternal joy;
They make the roofs and walls to ring.
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little female babe[2] does spring;

[1] The Spirit of Revolt organizes the world and establishes his own order
[2] The Church, outward religion, which at first is so sacred that no one dares touch her.

And she is all of solid fire
And gems and gold, that none his hand
Dares stretch to touch her baby form,
Or wrap her in his swaddling-band.

But she comes to the man she loves,
If young or old, or rich or poor;
They soon drive out the aged host,[1]
A beggar at another's door.

He wanders weeping far away,
Until some other take him in;
Oft blind and age-bent, sore distrest,
Until he can a maiden[2] win.

And to allay his freezing age,
The poor man takes her in his arms;
The cottage fades before his sight,
The garden and its lovely charms.

The guests are scatter'd through the land,
For the eye altering alters all;
The senses roll themselves in fear,
And the flat earth becomes a ball;[3]

The stars, sun, moon, all shrink away,
A desert vast without a bound,
And nothing left to eat or drink,
And a dark desert all around.

The honey of her infant lips,
The bread and wine of her sweet smile,
The wild game of her roving eye,
Do him to infancy beguile;[4]

For as he eats and drinks he grows
Younger and younger every day;

[1] The original impulse toward the Church. "This is the dark night of the Soul."

[2] The Soul's Inspiration, which must be united with the soul to make man whole.

[3] Science is no aid, since it reveals only "a desert vast without a bound."

[4] He finds his inspiration, feeds upon "the honey of her infant lips," and grows younger every day, while they wander in terror through the desert.

And on the desert wild they both
Wander in terror and dismay.

Like the wild stag she flees away,
Her fear plants many a thicket wild;
While he pursues her night and day,
By various arts of love beguil'd;

By various arts of love and hate,
Till the wild desert planted o'er
With labyrinths of wayward love,
Where roam the lion, wolf, and boar.

Till he becomes a wayward babe,
And she a weeping woman old,[1]
Then many a lover wanders here;
The sun and stars are nearer roll'd;

The trees bring forth sweet ecstasy
To all who in the desert roam;
Till many a city there is built,
And many a pleasant shepherd's home.[2]

But, when they find the frowning babe,
Terror strikes through the region wide:
They cry: "The babe! the babe is born!"
And flee away on every side.

For who dare touch the frowning form,
His arms is wither'd to its root;
Lions, boars, wolves, all howling flee,
And every tree doth shed its fruit.

And none can touch that frowning form,
Except it be a woman old;
She nails him down upon the rock,
And all is done as I have told.

(c. 1803)

[1] The cycle is complete, and the first stage of Innocence has returned.
[2] The pastoral existence comes again, and again the babe is born.

The Crystal Cabinet

THE maiden caught me in the wild,
Where I was dancing merrily;
She put me into her Cabinet,
And lock'd me with a golden key.

The Cabinet is form'd of gold
And pearl and crystal shining bright,
And within it opens into a world
And a little lovely moony night.

Another England there I saw,
Another London with its Tower,
Another Thames and other hills,
And another pleasant Surrey bower,

Another Maiden like herself,
Translucent, lovely, shining clear,
Threefold each in the other clos'd,—
O, what a pleasant trembling fear!

O, what a smile! a threefold smile
Fill'd me, that like a flame I burn'd;
I bent to kiss the lovely Maid,
And found a threefold kiss return'd.

I strove to seize the inmost form
With ardour fierce and hands of flame,
But burst the Crystal Cabinet,
And like a weeping Babe became—

A weeping Babe upon the wild,
And weeping Woman pale reclin'd,
And in the outward air again
I fill'd with woes the passing wind.

(c. 1803)

Auguries of Innocence

To SEE a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage.
A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell through all its regions.
A dog starv'd at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.
A horse misus'd upon the road
Calls to heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear.
A skylark wounded in the wing;
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game-cock clipt and arm'd for fight
Does the rising sun affright.
Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.
The wild deer, wand'ring here and there,
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misus'd breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe.
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.
He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be belov'd by men.
He who the ox to wrath has mov'd
Shall never be by woman lov'd.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.
The caterpillar on the leaf

Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
For the Last Judgment draweth nigh.
He who shall train the horse to war
Shall never pass the polar bar.
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,
Feed them and thou wilt grow fat.
The gnat that sings his summer's song
Poison gets from Slander's tongue.
The poison of the snake and newt
Is the sweat of Envy's foot.
The poison of the honey-bee
Is the artist's jealousy.
The prince's robes and beggar's rags
Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Through the world we safely go.
Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
The babe is more than swaddling bands;
Throughout all these human lands
Tools were made, and born were hands,
Every farmer understands.
Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in eternity;
This is caught by females bright,
And return'd to its own delight.
The bleat, the bark, bellow, and roar
Are waves that beat on heaven's shore.
The babe that weeps the rod beneath
Writes revenge in realms of death.
The beggar's rags, fluttering in air,
Does to rags the heavens tear.
The soldier, arm'd with sword and gun,
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.

The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore
One mite wrung from the labrer's hands
Shall buy and sell the miser's lands:
Or, if protected from on high,
Does that whole nation sell and buy
He who mocks the infant's faith
Shall be mock'd in age and death.
He who shall teach the child to doubt
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell and death.
The child's toys and the old man's reasons
Are the fruits of the two seasons.
The questioner, who sits so sly,
Shall never know how to reply.
He who replies to words of doubt
Doth put the light of knowledge out.
The strongest poison ever known
Came from Cæsar's laurel crown.
Naught can deform the human race
Like to the armour's iron brace.
When gold and gems adorn the plow,
To peaceful arts shall Envy bow.
A riddle, or the cricket's cry
Is to doubt a fit reply.
The emmet's inch and eagle's mile
Make lame Philosophy to smile.
He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe, do what you please.
If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out.
To be in a passion you good may do,
But no good if a passion is in you.
The whore and gambler, by the state
Licens'd, build that nation's fate.
The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave Old England's winding-sheet.
The winner's shout, the loser's curse,
Dance before dead England's hearse.
Every night and every morn

Some to misery are born.
Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight.
Some are born to sweet delight,
Some are born to endless night.
We are led to believe a lie
When we see not through the eye,
Which was born in a night to perish in a night,
When the soul slept in beams of light.
God appears, and God is light,
To those poor souls who dwell in night;
But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.

(c. 1803)

Milton

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

(1804)

To the Queen

THE door of Death is made of gold,
That mortal eyes cannot behold;
But when the mortal eyes are clos'd,
And cold and pale the limbs repos'd,
The soul awakes; and, wond'ring, sees
In her mild hand the golden keys:
The grave is heaven's golden gate,
And rich and poor around it wait;
O Shepherdess of England's fold,
Behold this gate of pearl and gold!

To dedicate to England's Queen
The visions that my soul has seen,
And, by her kind permission, bring
What I have borne on solemn wing,
From the vast regions of the grave,
Before her throne my wings I wave;
Bowing before my sov'reign's feet,
"The grave produc'd these blossoms sweet
In mild repose from earthly strife;
The blossoms of eternal life!"

(Publ. 1808)

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